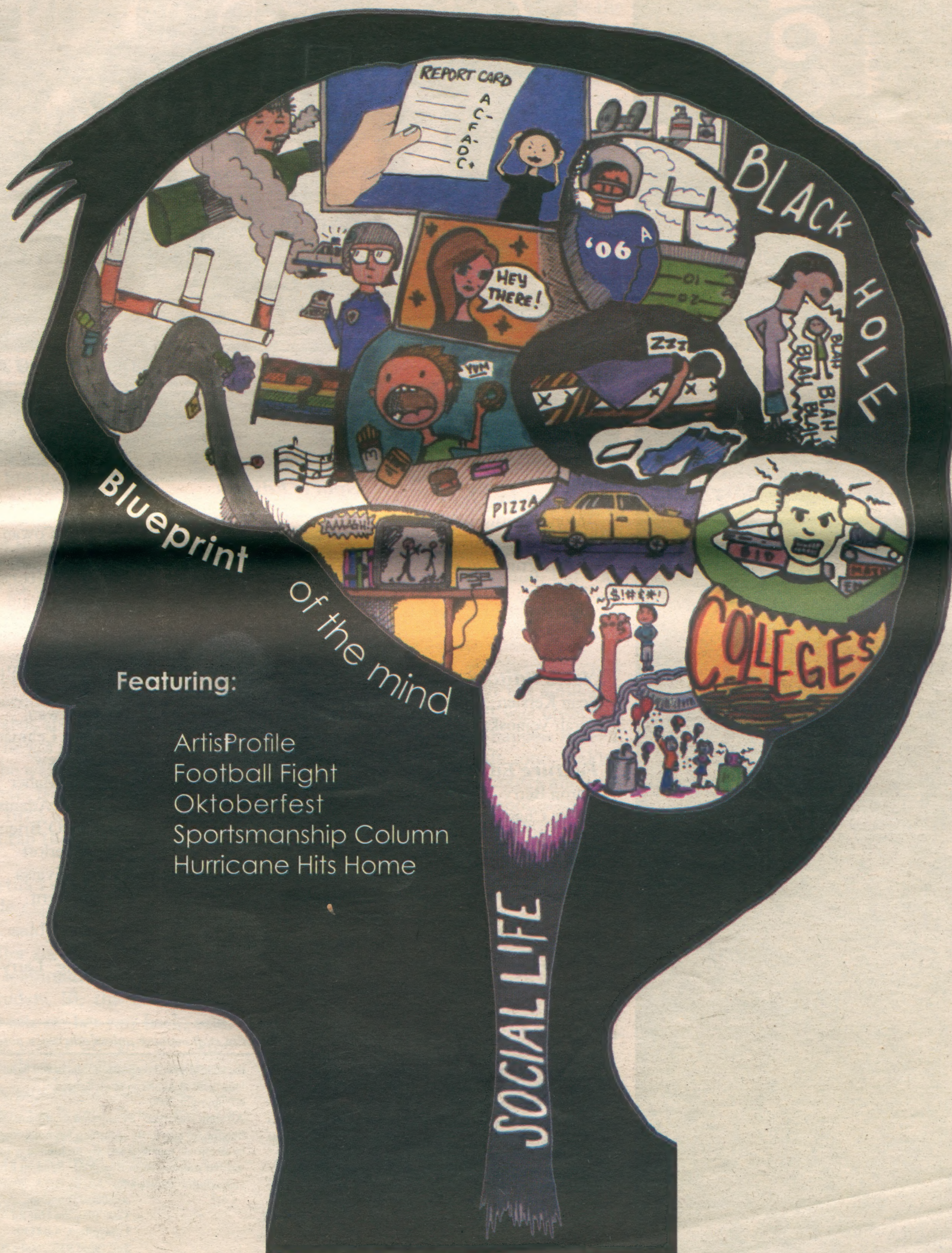


Volume 66 Issue 1 October 2005



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Courtesy Photo/Mo Huber

Is school spirit finally returning to Acalanes? HAPPY HOMECOMING 2005!

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Blueprint explores the vast, frightening world of the teen brain....
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Almost Abducted

Lafayette youth experiences several simultaneous scares

By Taylor Stern
Staff Writer

Terrifying encounters rattled both an Acalanes High School cross country runner and a Lafayette Elementary School student as each faced a potentially dangerous situation in a seemingly safe neighborhood.

On October 22, the junior varsity cross country team was running their usual five miles, this time it was by Springhill Elementary School. Around 4:20 pm, an Acalanes sophomore cross country runner, who wishes to remain anonymous, continued to run after her fellow teammates experienced fatigue and chose to walk. Student A quickly lost sight of her companions. She was running about a half mile past Springhill School, when at the intersection of Goyak and Springhill Road she saw a man in a red pickup truck pull in front of her. She was running past him, when the man got out of his truck, and said he needed help with his flat tire. Student A declined and kept running. The man asked again, and Student A ignored him and continued in the same direction. The man then proceeded to get out of his car and walk towards the athlete. According to Student A, he got close to her with his hand out like he was about to grab her.

The athlete, panicked when she noticed all four tires were full of air, then screamed and ran the direction she came from.

"My instinct kind of took over after years of people explaining what to do in this situation," said Student A.

Not long after she had turned around, she found her teammates. An anonymous teammate (Student B), the first person Student A ran into on her way back, said, "I was walking up the hill and she came running towards me yelling something about a creepy guy and to run back." After the fact, Student B said, "I was kind of confused about the situation. It was really random, and nobody was expecting it. I was really unsure and shocked about what had actually happened."

Lafayette police officer, Pedro de la Sol, who was informed of the situation after the fact said, "We will never know what this man's true intentions were. It is hard to have any type of follow up because the license plate number was not recorded."

This experience served as a wake up call to the victim, along with other students. While it is common to hear of terrible abductions in other areas, generally people would not consider it a likely problem in Lafayette. Student A agreed, "Afterwards, it was just unbelievable, you never expect something like that to happen in Lafayette. People always say it is such a safe little bubble."

Student A said, "Afterwards, it was just unbelievable, you never expect something like that to happen in Lafayette. People always say it is such a safe little bubble."

Parents also expressed concern. A Happy Valley Elementary School mom, who wishes to remain anonymous, said, "I usually don't think twice about letting my kids play outside in our quiet neighborhood, but with these latest developments, I feel like they need to be with a couple of friends, or I need to be out there with them."

After learning of the incident, cross country Coach Tad Beach felt similar to Student A. Beach said, "I was upset and shocked that this could happen here. It snapped me out of my safe zone, making me question our running routes and policies. I live in the neighborhood where the athlete was approached, making it very real to me. I felt very protective and sorry [for Student A]."

The next day, the cross country team ran the same route. However, the entire team ran together, the different speed groups did not run ahead or lag behind. Then, at the conclusion of practice, everybody joined together to discuss the previous day's events. At Coach Beach's urging, Student A explained her experience in detail.

Preventative procedures were established as well. The athletes agreed never to run alone, and also learned of various houses along their courses they could stop at in the event of any type of emergency or weird occurrence.

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"District-wide Post-Secondary Options Night - College is NOT the Only Option
Wednesday, November 16, 2005
7:00 - 8:30 pm
Informal for juniors and seniors regarding post secondary options, including college and apprenticeship.
Bring questions and get real answers from people who know."

Anti-Schwarzenegger Rally

Protesters say "Hasta la vista" to the Governor as local host raises campaign funds

By Sean Kersten
News Editor

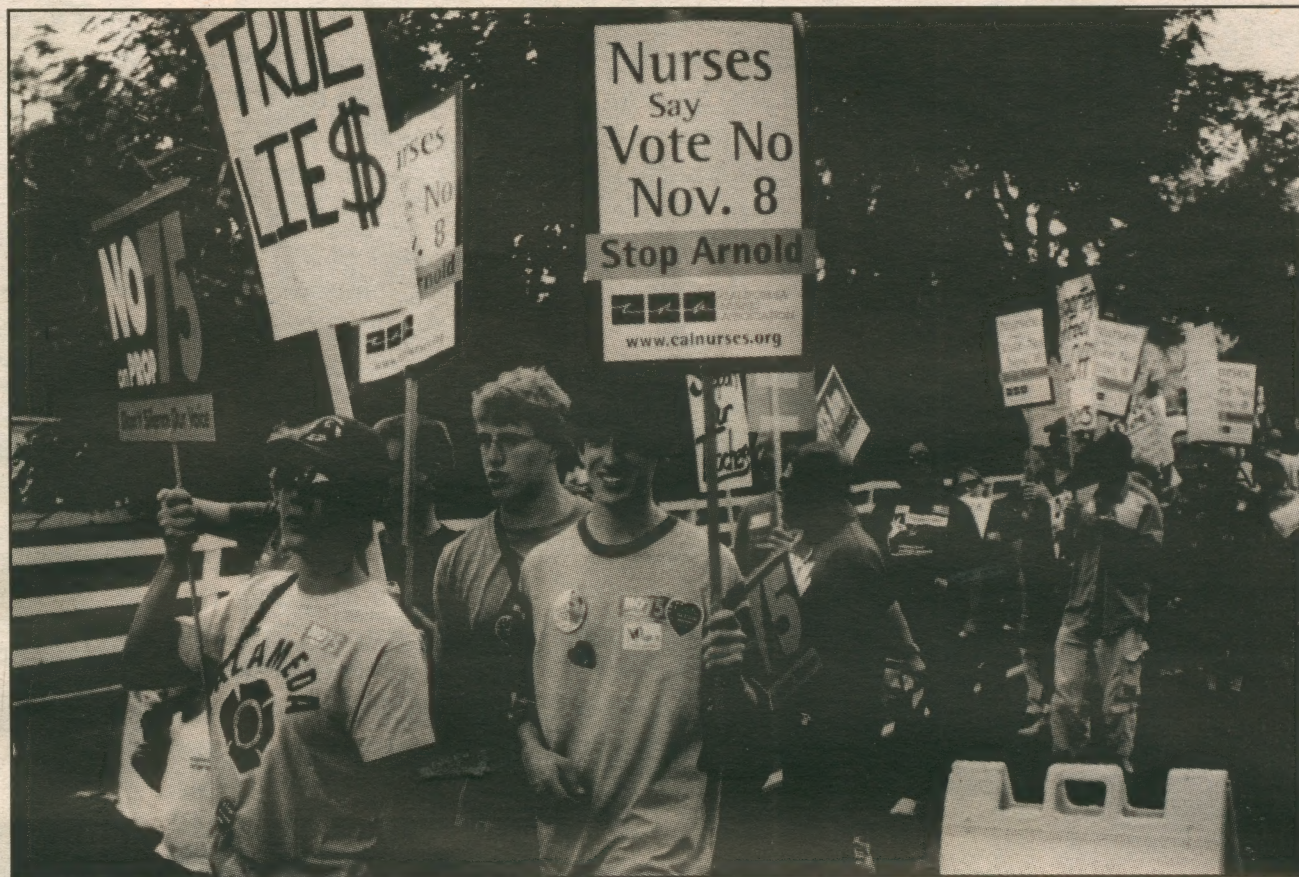
"Hey, hey, ho, ho! Girly man has got to go!" yelled protesters. Chants blasted through bullhorns, and homemade signs adamantly stabbed at the sky as Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger was greeted by approximately 200 protesters when he came to Lafayette for a fundraiser hosted by fellow republicans Rick and Janet Cronk.

Guests at the fundraiser passed neatly-manicured lawns and white picket fences as they drove down Happy Valley Road at around 6:00 PM on Wednesday, Sept. 28. However, protesters' chants could be heard echoing throughout the valley. As guests approached Cronk's house, they were greeted by two distinctly politically divided groups of picketers. Schwarzenegger supporters lined the street opposite the house while anti-Schwarzenegger protesters picketed diligently just 10 meters away.

Protesters met at the Lafayette Bart Station at 5:30 PM and took a shuttle to Cronk's house. The protest was intended for firemen, nurses, and teachers who will be affected by propositions on the Nov. 8th special election. Several gay rights activists as well as several Acalanes students also attended.

Approximately 20 counter-protesters showed up to show their support for Schwarzenegger. Bryan Welden, one of the pro-Schwarzenegger supporters, who also worked for President Bush's re-election campaign, said that he heard about the protest through word of mouth and wanted to demonstrate to show his support. Expressing his thoughts of the attendance of pro-Schwarzenegger supporters compared to protesters, he said that while he was slightly disappointed with the attendance, Welden confidently accused anti-Schwarzenegger protesters (specifically teachers) of being paid to show up. Tracy Lloyd, another Schwarzenegger supporter standing nearby, immediately agreed with Welden's statement.

Acalanes science teacher Lori Tewksbury, and president of the Acalanes



Blueprint Photo/Marie Dieden

Junior Jeremy Wolff and senior Paul Cattaneo protest outside of a dinner benefitting Arnold Schwarzenegger's campaign

Education Association laughed off such allegations proclaiming, "Nobody gets paid to go to protests. People came on their own."

The protesters came from as far away as Antioch, Dublin, and Pleasanton and included many fire fighters, nurses, teachers, and students as young as 12 years old. Miramonte High School Democratic Club president Ryan Guptill said that he thought the turnout was great.

"It really is Lamorinda. It's our local firefighters, our local nurses, our friends, our parents, our neighbors, and we're all here because we don't think they should make it harder for the hardest working Californians," said Guptill. "It's great to see a lot of young people out here."

Regarding to protest Tewksbury said, "I think it was very successful in terms of the number of people that were there and it brought attention to our issues with Schwarzenegger."

As the guests were escorted in by several police officers up Cronk's driveway, they were greeted by chants of "Shame on you!" from the crowd of protesters. Although the stand in was supposed to end at 7, many protesters stayed until

much later.

The function was one of half a dozen fundraisers that have been held by Schwarzenegger's supporters in the past two months. Couples were asked to donate \$25,000.

Schwarzenegger spoke for 25 minutes about how important the election was to California from his point of view. He also reviewed four or five of the propositions and answered a few questions from the attendees. Schwarzenegger then spent between 15 to 20 minutes at each of the five tables speaking with donors as the entrees were served in the sit-down dinner portion of the event.

Expressing his thoughts on the evening Cronk said, "I think he is such an articulate and enthusiastic person and I think there was educational value as well."

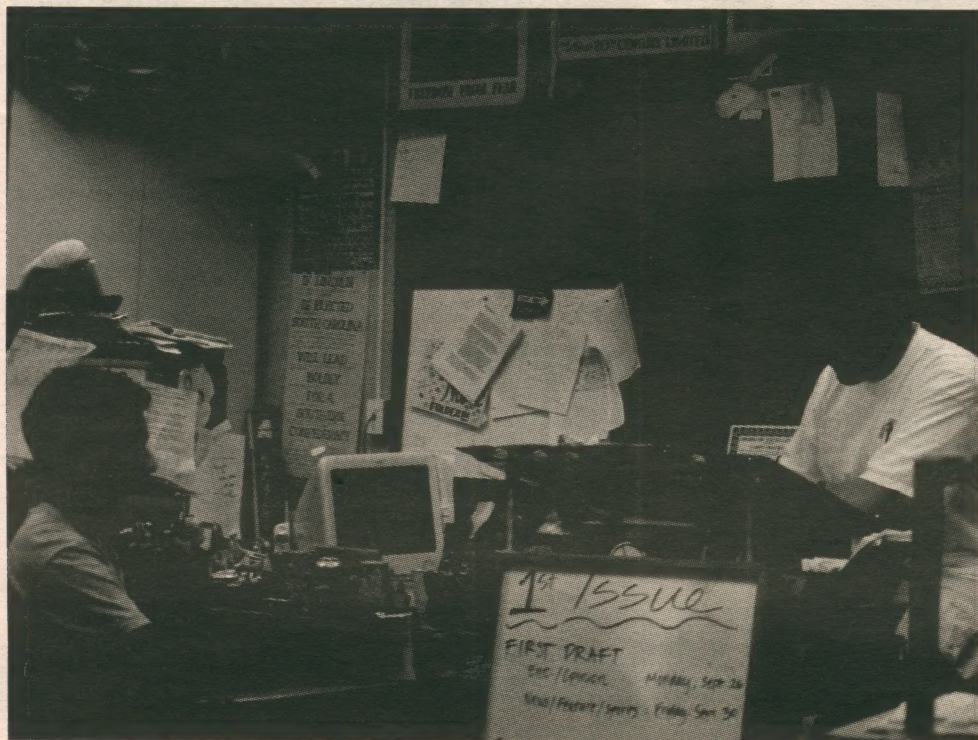
He added, "I think what's most refreshing about Arnold Schwarzenegger is he doesn't need this job, he brings and honest approach to his job, and what he thinks is important for California."

Underscoring his view of what is needed in California Cronk said, "I think the most important issue on the ballot is Proposition

Continued on pg 10

Football Capped with Controversy

Aftermath of football game leaves many questions unanswered and many folks bitter



In a Blueprint press conference, senior Joe Joyce details the emotional turmoil of the Acalanes football game against College Park

By Jay Yarlagadda
Staff Writer

Acalanes' football suffered a tragic let-down at the hands of not only their opponents, College Park, but also at those of the referees, according to many witnesses of the spectacle, which lead to much dispute and bitterness from the Dons' Nation.

"I was very frustrated. Personally, I wanted to have an undefeated season and because of the blown call, [we won't be able to do that. However], it wasn't just the blown call. You have to look at the game in its entirety," said Dons' senior office/defensive lineman Joseph Joyce, who witnessed the play from the sidelines and was very boisterous in his opinion of the controversial call. Joyce continued, in a Blueprint interview, "There were things we could have done to make that not an issue but at the same time, it would have felt better to get the win, I'm not going to lie; I was very angry with the officials."

The Dons ended up losing 35-31 in a game with intensity and emotion leading to utter dismay, according to Chase Bryson of the Contra Costa Times. The Dons were up 10 points with about 1:30 left on the clock in the 4th quarter. This would lead one to believe that the game was all but wrapped there. Mr. Nickerson escorted them off the field to make sure nothing

serious happened. They were definitely getting yelled at."

Joyce said the locker room was full of "dismay" after the game. The guys held out hope that an appeal made by the Dons would reward them with the victory, but, according to Joyce, "it was a really sad environment."

The appeal, as it turned out, was not even taken into consideration by the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF), which further infuriated the Dons.

Joyce confessed, "That made me really mad as well. [The refs are not] even going to give us the time of day. They're not even going to look at it. They ruled that they weren't even going to look at it. I felt that was very inexperienced of them."

The possibility arose that CIF did not look at the ruling because it might contradict the ruling of the referees and overall, Joyce did not deny the statement.

"I feel they are trying to stand by the refs, even if the refs do blow a call," said Joyce.

However, according to Gil Lemmon, Associate Commissioner of the CIF North Coast Section, "NCS member schools have agreed to use National Federation rules. The use of any replay or television monitoring equipment by the officials in making any decision relating to the game is prohibited."

Lemmon also said, "We have no authority to review the game. It is a league contest and any decision to review a video tape would be up to the league."

Joyce felt that in some ways, the integrity of the referees had been taken into question because of the game.

Tom Ehrhorn, NCS commissioner agreed with Lemmon saying, "Protests of NF rules are not recognized. The referee's decisions are final in all matters pertaining the game."

In any way, those who were at the game agree that the refs botched the call. Initially when the ball hit the ground, all of the refs signified that the play was dead and the kick was no good. Allegedly, a whistle was heard by 5 or 6 Dons players who were on the field. The College Park coaches hounded the officials as they walked off the field, saying that their player scored a touchdown. After about five minutes of discussion between the refs and the College Park coaches, the refs gave the Falcons the touchdown.

Coach Ron Thompson said, "The refs blew the whistle, they called the play dead and once they call the play dead, the game is over and they came back and reversed it."

After the officials made the call and walked off the field, some of the College Park players started to talk trash to and push around some of the Dons' players. This led to a scuffle where players began pushing and screaming at opposing players.

"A lot of the College Park kids were celebrating in our faces chanting, screaming and even pushing some of our kids," said Joyce who continued by saying, "If they're going to push us, we're going to push them back."

Another Dons' player, senior right guard Andy Durgin, who was kneeling on the sideline when the play occurred, agreed with Joyce.

Observers of the game said that the Acalanes players, immediately after the call was overturned, started throwing down their helmets and flipping College Park players the bird. Joyce concurred that he saw that kind of action.

"That was frustration; the flipping of the bird part was retaliation. They started it first. Shoving players, flipping people off, taunting, and nothing was done to control them so we [responded to their actions]."

Assistant coach Randy Takahashi said, "There were probably some things that were done that shouldn't have been done," but he believes that the players handled

Blueprint Photo/Bryan Schnugg

Students Speak, Parents Listen

Leadership seniors fill parents in on the Acalanes "party scene"

By Hannah O'Brien
Staff Writer

To increase parent knowledge of student life a group called Healthy Choice was added to this year's freshmen and sophomore orientation. Parents of the freshmen and sophomore classes listened to a student board called Healthy Choice speak about issues regarding the lives of today's Acalanes students. The meeting gave the parents a chance to ask questions about drug and alcohol use at Acalanes, and of what the "true party scene" actually consists of.

Commencing at 7:00 pm, the annual meetings took place in the Performing Arts Center, and the common agenda was run through: an introduction and welcome to all parents by John Nickerson, information on peer tutoring, and an introduction from the AHS Parents Club President.

Shortly after, Assistant Principal Janet Carlson welcomed the parents and introduced the "Healthy Choices" board, a group of parents that meets monthly to discuss on and off campus issues regarding the Acalanes student body. A facet of this group focuses on parent awareness and support. The panel almost unanimously though this year is time for a change in improving the understanding of the reality of high school for today's parents.

Walking in the door around 7:20 pm, a group of seven seniors descended the steps of the Arts Center. Students Nick Carrel, Mo Huber, Dan Masi, Molly Peterson, Theo Constantouros, Megan Haley, and Derrick Emmons made up the student panel who answered questions submitted by parents attending the meeting.

These panelists were chosen "as representatives of the Acalanes experience. They are athletes, leadership, club members, scholars, yearbook and newspaper

editors. Seniors were chosen because they have the most years of experience as Acalanes students," said Carlson.

While signing in, parents had the opportunity to write down questions for the student panel on index cards. Unfortunately, not all parents were so prepared to ask thought-provoking questions. "I didn't know there would be a student panel at the meeting. So I had no expectation," stated Ellen Breslin, a freshmen parent.

Carlson acted as the moderator of these questions during the parent meeting. The seminar began with innocent questions such as, "What would you advise for freshmen 'to get on the fast track' with the hard load of academics that high school puts on them?" Carrel responded with one resounding word of help, "Lockers." Other panelists suggested actively using the homework notebook that is passed out

Carrel reassured parents that in reality, very few freshmen are ever at "traditional high school parties", simply because they haven't made many older friends, and juniors and seniors who have worked their way to upperclassmen status are unlikely to allow freshmen in.

In addition, Carrel stated that the party factor really becomes an issue as soon as kids can drive. Kids behind the wheel are instantly presented with a freedom they've never had before, thus giving them the ability to go to parties, friends' houses, or other places without asking his or her parents for a ride.

Many parents were concerned with Acalanes' reputation of being a "party school." Carrel assured them that Acalanes is an average high school- the pressure is there, but it's no different than the other high schools across the state and the country.

He also described how pressure is applied to kids, saying that it nearly always comes from students' closest friends. Masi added that it is extremely unlikely that a random kid will come up to, someone during a party and ask him or her to smoke or drink something, especially because drugs and alcohol cost money, and offering it freely to strangers wastes his or her money. It's unlikely one would waste their substance on someone he or she isn't friends with.

Parents were also curious about the availability of alcohol, and said that it is rumored that many students are able to get a hold of alcohol. The panelists agreed, saying that it was normally widely available to students who wanted to acquire it. One of the members replied that it wasn't uncommon that kids often take it from their parents, because it is right under their noses.

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Healthy Choices panel enlightens parents on student life at Acalanes.

Blueprint Photo/ Joe Dondoro

at Dons' Days, keeping math grades up because often they affect one's ability to get into higher math courses later on, and talking to teachers when one's struggling.

The topic of balancing school work and extra curricular activities ensued. "I tried to summarize the questions," Carlson said, "by grouping the questions into generic categories."

The next topic changed course. "Tell us about the parties that students go to, and are they expected to go and use drugs or alcohol."

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Football Controversy

Continued from pg xx

the situation well enough considering the circumstances.

More than half of the Dons' squad engaged in the scuffle while administrators attempted to restrain them. "The coaches were yelling at us to get back. They were holding kids back and making sure no one got hurt," said Joyce. In contrast, the College Park coach egged his team on. "[He was] on the field running around saying 'Touchdown, touchdown, Woo hoo.' It really showed us a lot about his character. He lacks a lot of class," said Joyce.

Coach Takahashi, however, said he saw "the College Park coaches getting their players back and together." He also added, "I think you saw a little emotion at that point, but we were all emotional."

"[The Acalanes coaches] don't support [the actions after the game] but they said you've got to protect your guys," said Joyce, who continued by saying that their coaches told the players to "show more class than [the other team]. If their going to do stuff like that, we're going to show them that we are classier than them."

Durgin and Joyce both believe that no

disciplinary action is necessary. Durgin commented, "I thought [the actions] were fine for the situation" and Joyce concurred by saying, "Our retaliation was simply just to protect our guys."

Had some coaches and players not held players back from getting involved in the scuffle, a much bigger conflict could have emerged. Had he seen some of his boys getting beaten on, Joyce said that he would have stopped that in "whatever ways I deemed necessary at the time."

In addition, a College Park parent, whom the team allegedly identified as Mr. Fragger, a man allegedly related to College Park running back Brandon Fragger, came onto the field and started striking and attacking Dons' players.

Every player agreed

that this event crossed the line. "He obviously crossed the line because only players and coaches are allowed on the field," said Durgin.

Joyce agreed saying, "If a parent strikes a kid, that is definitely crossing the line. There should be disciplinary actions for parents and coaches who run onto the field striking minors."

According to Joyce, the football team is taking this game and the events following it very seriously. Despite the fact that College Park is a lesser opponent and that this game will have little significance at the end of the season in terms of standings they want to take from this loss the fact that an opponent simply cannot be taken for granted. "We're taking this game seriously," said Joyce.

Coach Thompson agreed saying, "We lost one close game we shouldn't have lost, but we learned a great lesson [regarding] celebrating, how to finish a game, and how to finish the season in a manner that will make everyone very proud."

"A lot of the College Park kids were celebrating in our faces, chanting, screaming and even pushing some of our kids. If they're going to push us, we're going to push back" -Joe Joyce

Healthy Choice

Continued from pg 6

Carrel commented that the presence of fake I.D.'s is common at Acalanes. However, this is true of any average high school across the country.

Carlson remarked, "Two years ago, a 'Healthy Kids Survey' was taken at Acalanes from a class of 9th graders and 11th graders. In the freshman numbers, 33% said they had used an illegal substance of some kind. By the Junior year, the number had increased to 66%. Can you explain this jump?" Clearly, the sophomore year was the critical turning point. Carrel again implied that cars make all the difference in the world, and seeing that most kids turn 16 during their sophomore year, it opens up a world of experiences for them to fall into.

Post-meeting, the responses from parents were similar. Freshman parent Karen Mulvaney wasn't surprised at the answers the panelists delivered, but their ability to share the information confidently. "I really feel proud of the students at Acalanes and I feel great about having the opportunity to get to know them."

Ellen Breslin also found the information easy to take in. "I thought the meeting was very helpful. The more information parents receive the more comfortable they should become."

Regarding today's change in society, however, responses were more assorted. One parent commented that high school life for them, in terms of social scene being extraordinarily important, is fairly similar to today's world. They felt, however, that the rate at which information can change hands and the technology piece that goes along with it has changed dramatically. It is much easier to organize parties and gatherings quickly with cell phones, instant messenger, and text messaging; but in turn, it is even easier for things to go wrong just as quickly.

Clearly, for some on-looking parents, times have changed. Breslin said, "I went to high school in the late 1960's and there is no comparison. I don't think my parents ever went to a meeting like this."

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news

Bugging Bulldozers

Construction disrupts campus

By Valerie Lew
Staff Writer

Loud construction, annoying interruptions, and difficulty concentrating were all effects of the construction that took place over the past year.

In July 2004, the old 500 wing was torn down to build new classrooms for the 2005/2006 school year. In addition to rebuilding the 500 wing, Alton Construction, the company Acalanes is using, also repaved the parking lot and resurface the baseball field.

As anticipated, construction exceeded the projected July 2005 deadline, and caused annoyance to many students and staff who are losing patience.

"It's kind of a distraction, for first period English with Mr. Derr. You can't concentrate and do your work," said sophomore Kelsey Wyatt-Mair. Not only

were students all around campus distracted, but there are also worries of it not being finished in time for certain sports.

"If they don't get it done in time for soccer season, we will have to have a weird schedule, like last year, and I wouldn't want to have to go to another school [to play games]," said Wyatt-Mair.

The sports schedule is an impediment that construction workers are trying to work around. "We are trying to fit it in between your guys' schedule and the football games," said Errol Kister, the bulldozer operator, about the projected date of completion.

Students were not the only ones affected by the construction, which continued into the first five weeks of school.

"I found it so difficult to do my work while the construction is being done because it feels like that every time I try to

go on campus, either a truck or a piece of equipment is in the way. I can never get a clear path to any place that I need to go," said head Custodian, Everett Woolfolk.

Classes closest to the construction, such as Ken Derr's English class, were affected just as badly. "It was very noisy for the first three weeks of school, and it actually got to the point where we had to stop. And all we could

about the noise problem," said Nickerson.

"I didn't go to Mr. Nickerson because the construction had to be done. There's nothing else you can do about it," said Derr.

The main priority for the workers was just to get the work done. "Just like you guys go to school and get your stuff done, we're trying to get our stuff done," said Kister. "Everybody has their own

work and is just trying to finish it. They're always going to disrupt other people. There maybe noise or distractions but no matter what you do, you're always going to disrupt people."

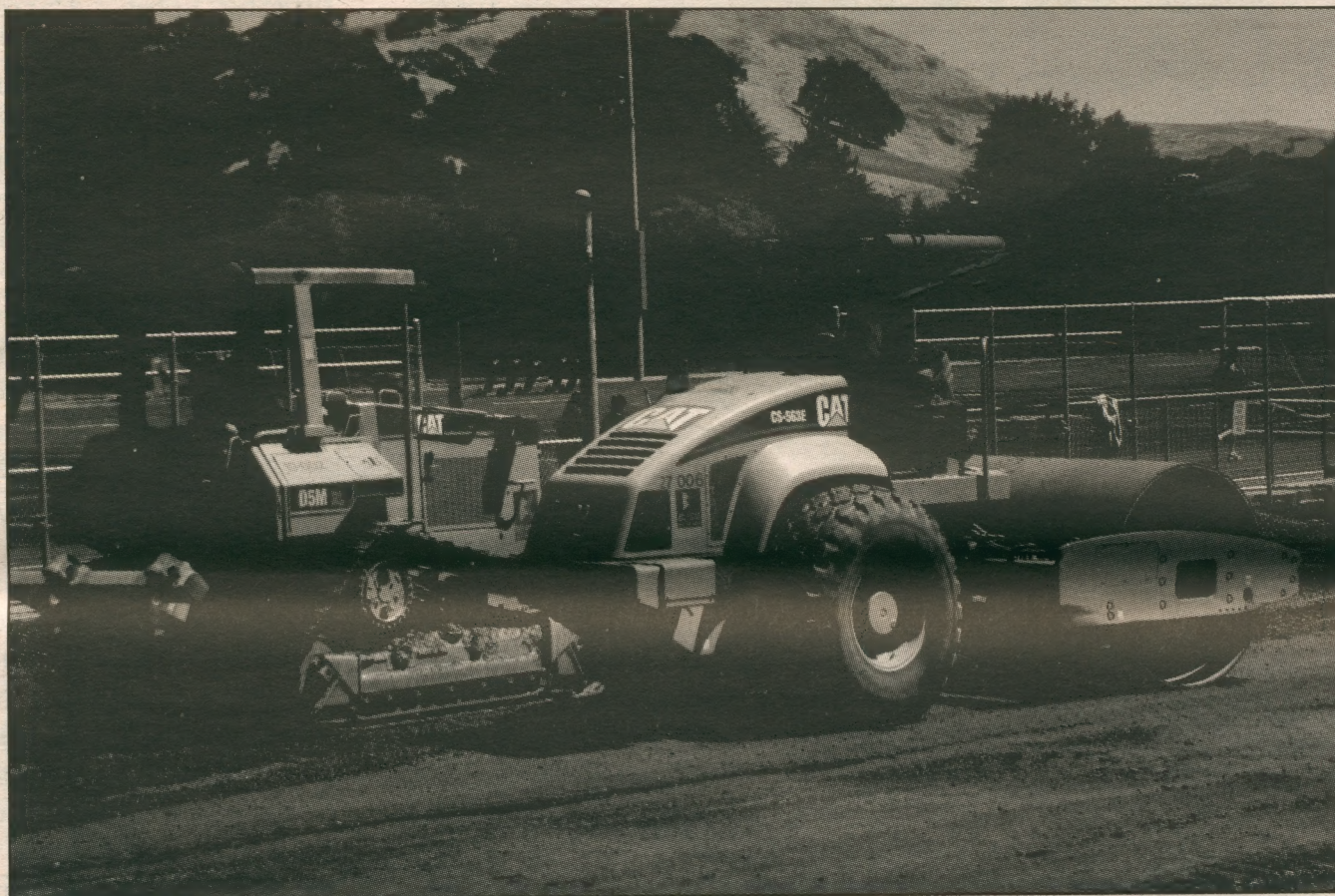
Although the official deadline was set for July of 2005, it is unclear when the final touches will be completed.

Although the finished product of the parking lot is exceptional, the students, teachers and staff tolerated many days of

annoyance and distractions in the process.

Fortunately "The loudest part of the construction is already done, and we're really just at the tail end here. From here on out, it should get a little quieter," said Woolfolk.

-Jennifer Hirano contributed to this story.



Construction causes disruption on Acalanes campus during the first quarter.

do during those times was laugh," said Derr. In addition to the constant interruptions and distractions from the bulldozer, the language between the workers was just as intolerable as the actual interruptions. "The only time I ever asked the workers to minimize the volume was when the language was really bad. Some of the workers were fighting, loudly, with spicy language. However, it was during brunch, so none of the students were affected by this," said Derr.

The noise pollution progressed for another two weeks, but despite the constant interruptions, none of the teachers made any formal complaints. "No teachers this year came to me

Blueprint Photo/Bryan Schmitt

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WASC Parent Survey Results

Parent opinion of Acalanes Decreases
Staff Writer

To the dissatisfaction of Principal Nickerson, over the past two years, parent opinion of Acalanes has decreased. The Western Association of Schools and colleges (WASC) requires schools to go through a self-study every one to six years. Acalanes was subject to this process during the 2004-2005 school year.

A component of this was a parent survey in which parents were asked to fill out a survey where they responded to 21 positive statements varying from their student's understanding of discipline policy to the courses and help available to their student. The parents then gave an answer ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree".

From 2004, the first year of the survey, to 2005, the most recent year, there has been a gradual shift of about 5-10% from "strongly agree" to "generally agree" and a smaller shift of around 0-3% from "generally agree" to "disagree." John Nickerson, principal of Acalanes High School, expressed his concerns. "It is a little troubling when you see this negative shift, [However], we are not going to bring any radical changes based on this negative shift," said Nickerson.

The large majority of parents who participated in the survey agreed with the statements. Only about 10% of parents responding with the choice of "disagree" or "strongly disagree." However, the survey, which was only available online, may not be completely reliable due to the fact that approximately 449 parents out of 518 parents participated in the survey. "We have talked about putting together focus groups to gain a better understanding of why they are perceiving we are not doing well in some of those areas," said Nickerson.

The survey will be administered again this coming spring to give the administration a three year look at trends. The administration will then look at these trends and work on improving the school based on the parents' responses. A survey for students was also administered last year and will most likely be given again this year. The goal of these surveys will help to give the school a better understanding of parents' feelings and allow them to make any changes necessary to running a more efficient school.

Abduction Scares

Continued from pg 3

On the same day as the cross country participant's tribulation, an elementary school girl found herself in a similar noteworthy event. Walking home from Lafayette School, the young girl was approached by a man standing in front of his blue pick. The man asked if she wanted to come see his puppies. The girl wisely screamed and ran away. Student A said, "I was definitely more scared in this case. I am really happy that this girl knew what to do. At least I am in high school, she is in grade school, and it seems almost worse that way. It was extremely shocking to me that these two events both happened in the same day."

Officer de la Sol said, "The police department is investigating both reports, but has not found any further information. People have reported sightings of men who they thought fit the descriptions, but we have not found anything."

Authority figures throughout all of Acalanes' neighboring schools were immediately alerted of the episodes. Many, including the Acalanes High School principal John Nickerson and Lafayette School District superintendent Linda Weesner, sent out informative emails to their students' parents. The emails notified the parents of the situation, and instructed them to discuss the issue with their children. They also suggested parents promote awareness to their children.

Happy Valley Elementary School principal Wendy Patterson distributed a letter, and encouraged the fourth and fifth grade teachers to address the situation to their classes. The fourth and fifth graders also received an opportunity to talk to a police officer.

Patterson said of the situations, "The events were very sad and scary, but they served as a good reminder that despite your instinct to trust, not everybody is good. It is hard to say no to nice looking people, and I am glad some of the kids were able to hear this from a police officer," said Patterson.

Shortly after the hype from these two events settled down, two new incidents were reported from the Springhill area. An email from Linda Weesner described that on Tuesday, September 27, a strange man was spotted watching a young girls' soccer practice at Springhill with

suspicious intent. When, a group of fathers tried to approach him, he left abruptly, and disappeared.

Two days later, a red truck stopped at a lemonade stand near Springhill School on Kincheloe Court. One of the four men got out of the truck and questioned the kids in a questionable manner. Then the mother, originally obstructed from view, stepped forward. Catching sight of her, the man said something to the extent of, "It is good that your mom's here; she looks big and strong and if anyone tried to kidnap any of you, she would fight them off." Then he started handing out one dollar bills.

Disturbingly, the man described in both of these newer incidents matched Student A's description of the man who asked her for help with his car: a man in his late twenties, early thirties, with a blond buzz cut, a few inches shy of six feet, and stocky build. Furthermore, in the lemonade stand incident, the man was driving a red truck, as was the man

"The events were very sad and scary, but they served as a good reminder that, despite your best instinct to trust, not everybody is good." -Wendy Patterson, Happy Valley Principal

from the cross country event.

Though they don't anticipate incidents like these to ever happen, some nearby schools are prepared for the worst. The Lafayette Police reported that Orinda Intermediate School wisely joined the SmileSafe Kids program. In this program, students receive two safety identification cards with their portrait and vital information. If a child is lost for whatever reason, the program easily notifies law enforcement and gives them their portrait and description, also found on the card. The speed at which a child is found improves greatly if officials know exactly who they are looking for, which is what the program hopes these cards provide. The system also provides students with ways of preventing issues, and what one should do in difficult situations.

*Student A, the junior teammate, the Happy Valley parent, and the elementary school girl's identity were kept anonymous for safety reasons.

news

Special Election Protest

Continued from pg 4

77, which is redistricting. Redistricting has caused politics from California to go to the far left and the far right."

Another important issue in the debated November special election is regarding union dues. Proposition 75 would require public employee unions to get annual written consent from an employee in order to charge and use employee dues or fees for political purposes. Many have complained that while it restricts unions from donating money, it does not restrict big businesses from doing the same thing.

However, that does not mean individuals cannot contribute. "Members of the union should have the right to agree or disagree on how that portion of their dues is spent," said Cronk. "There should be a complete election reform in fundraising. This will be the most expensive election in California. What a waste of money, but the public unions, they will raise a couple times more money against [Proposition] 75 than will be raise for it."

According to Acalanes english teacher Eric Honda, "It is totally useless because there is already a system in place where on their application form, teachers can fill in a bubble that says I don't want to dues used for political purposes, but this would make us every year have to get everybody's permission which would be a huge bureaucratic nightmare."

Another hot topic on the ballot is Proposition 76. "Prop 76 will further destroy Californian school funding," said Acalanes Union High School District Superintendent Jim Negri. "It gives any governor the absolute right to cut funding at any time during the year which makes it impossible to plan."

In response to this, Cronk said that Prop. 76 was in place so that "the state can't go bankrupt when there are dramatic changes in the economy. The government has to have some way of changing their priorities in times of emergencies. It is not fair to tie the hands of the people we elect to run our state government."

He added that he hopes "school boards [won't] have to deal with change in the middle of the year."

In the meantime however, firemen, parents, teachers, etc... are trying to deal with potential change by heading to phone booths and trying to make a difference, while the governor and his supporters try to put their money where their mouth is.

Oktoberfest

Best of the Würst



Junior Bill Meyer prepares Bratwurst for hungry students at Oktoberfest

By Valerie Lew
Staff Writer

Acalanes recently experienced the first Oktoberfest, most likely in world history, that had absolutely no beer (or anything that resembles it). Due to the recent bill that restricts the sale of soft drinks on school campuses, Bill 965, the German Club could not include root beer in its Oktoberfest 2005 menu.

According to German Club President, senior Tim Flaherty, they tried to gain permission from the administration to serve root beer but they had no luck.

"I think, that at our age we are responsible enough to make a decision like drinking soda for ourselves. And unlike vending machines, which serve soda all the time, we have root

beer once a year. So I think they're being a little bit tough.", said junior and German Club treasurer Charles Henrikson.

The fest had to go on despite the lack of a clearly crucial element. What is an Oktoberfest without beer (even when it is just root beer)?

When life hands you lemons, you sell lemonade.

So, on October 7, the festival attendees washed down their bratwurst with ice-cool lemonade.

Oktoberfest was started last year as a way of increasing interest in the German program. Flaherty added that the profit this year was similar to last year when

root beer was sold. Half of the profits earned will go to a charity and the other half will go towards a German Club field trip.

For future Oktoberfests, Flaherty said that he plans to look into serving root beer. The German Club can bear no (root) beer, but they still have the best of the würost.

Blueprint Photo/ Ali Cellini



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Adults and Children Welcome

Teenage Mutant Ninja Brains

Hemisphere I: Master Splinter's insight into teenage brains

By **Alexx Perloff**
Staff Writer

The teen brain. Complex, intricate, kinda gooey. What isn't to love?

Well, believe it or not, people seem to think it isn't so great. Apparently teens are "difficult" and "irrational." Ridiculous. Of course adults would like to view the teen brain in their terms, black and white, so they could understand why, how, and what their teens (or any teens for that matter) are doing. But this is a gray area--gray matter to be precise--of unknowns.

Sure it can balance ionic equations or write five page essays on the outcome of German elections, yet when someone asks what they did that day, they can say no more than "oh, nothing."

For a long time parents, doctors, and teens alike wanted to probe the complexity of what some may consider a teen insane asylum (but parents were never teens, they will never know what it's like). Unfortunately few large-scale medical or psychological studies have ever been conducted.

The teen age. The age of ultimate development when the brain has become that unfailingly (il)logical calculator that business people thrive upon, has been analyzed and re-analyzed since the advent of the MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) scan. Don't try to hide anything, it'll see right through you.

But even this advanced brainchild of human intellect, built to observe the very substance that created it is only able to reveal the brain's size and structure, like an amateur painter's reproduction of a Michelangelo mural. Size counts a lot to us humans, but no mysteries of capability and prowess to our ultimate, internal human supercomputer have ever been connected to size.

Teenagers managed to get off scot-free from the probing e-eye of science until the 1980's with the invention of the fMRI (functional MRI), which allows doctors to see how active the different parts of the brain are, "especially at different ages," Dr. Candida Brown, a neu-

rologist at Children's Hospital Oakland told Blueprint. It allows function to meet photo to create facsimile.

The fMRI may eventually become a kind of Cliff Notes edition available to those parents who only understand that their child's day has been "good," that he did "nothing," and that everything is "the same."

Now headway, especially in the literal sense, can begin to move toward the understanding of teenage thought processes. Doctors now use these mechanical devices, displaying images akin to

Picasso on acid, to unravel some of the toughest mysteries and strangest histories that may unlock the key to why bedlam as well as genius among teens exists.

Looking at fMRI images will not suddenly allow people to completely understand or manipulate teenagers, but it may allow the

world to begin to crack the teenage wonders. Imagine unlocking the motives behind teenage public displays of affection, continuous overuse of the word "like," and that reckless habit of racing down highways at speeds not meant for ground-based vehicles. No one should have to waste time trying to win a losing battle against the wall of the human brain. We need our Trojan Horse.

Scientists, like Dr. Jay Giedd of the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) in Bethesda, Maryland, who declined a Blueprint interview after repeated requests, have begun to study teens in groups and analyze images that could one day cure neurological diseases such as autism.

On a more local scale, this research could even make high school life more bearable to both the authority figures and the emotionally charged inmates. "I think [teachers] are really fascinated by this research," said Julie Schweitzer of the University of Maryland Psychiatric Research Center in an exclusive Blueprint interview, who is another pre-eminent scientist in her field. "I think a lot of them feel like the research

Doctors now use fMRI's, displaying images akin to Picasso on acid, to unravel some of the toughest mysteries and strangest histories of [teenage behavior].

feature

ACALANES BLUEPRINT

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Featured...

Is Acalanes High School porking up this winter? The statistics are out, and the results may be somewhat surprising.

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we are doing makes sense and in some ways for them we are developing things that they already know. We are just showing them a different level."

Don't think the cure for the common teen is quick and cheap, however. It will likely take more time than this generation of teens has left in their undeveloped states. However, many prominent researchers agree change is imminent. Time will tell whether this change in scientific understanding will shed light on the cold, primal, and seemingly uncalculated reactions of teens.

The classic, time-tested refrain of: "What are you?!!!" "Who are you?!" is what inevitably pops right out of the incredulous, wide open maw of adult figures aghast at the fact that their son or daughter has just thrown the computer out the window in a fit of rage.

Time and time again, this age old scenario plays out between teens and their elders; each not knowing what makes the other tick as they do. What causes the friction that parents call teen angst and teens call parental psychosis?

fMRI Likely to Decode the Twisted Web We Weave

"You haven't even begun to act mature."

It was previously speculated that the brain is finished developing at age 12, having already full grown size and cognitive development. Imagine if the height of everyone's mental capability was that of a twelve year old. It would be a sad sign if adults continued to go through the prepubescent chaos of constant play dates and never ending hormonal urges. Now that doctors can actually see into the mental depths of a functioning neurological roller-coaster, doctors have recalculated the terminal age of brain development to be around a whopping 25 years old. The shift in hypothesis comes on the heels of the discovery of neural growth and pruning (explained later). While the brain is at its full size early on, it has not reached its full potential as a carefully crafted tool until later.

"Who made you so messed up?"

Every brain is made of billions of tiny cells called neurons. It is the neuron body, and its array of alien like antennae, that receives and processes the electrical and chemical signals that make up a thought. The axons, which are the lightning rod extensions of the neuron that carry the electrical impulses, are surrounded by a white substance called myelin. The myelin helps to insulate the axon and helps the electrical impulses to run faster and smoother, much like the insulation around a wire in a massive electrical machine.

The neuron bodies, taken as a whole, tend to group in an upper layer of the brain called the cortex. It is this cortex that is referred to by doctors as the grey matter of the brain. The white

matter, as it is known, is the axon, myelin structure that is oriented so that

it runs deep into the center of the brain. The white matter makes up a majority of the brain; however there is more grey matter in the center of the brain that acts as a processing unit. During neural pruning and growth, the grey matter actually increases and then decreases in size while the white matter explodes into full form.

"Getting wiser with age isn't worth it if I have to be like you!"

It may surprise many that the prenatal fetus actually has more neurons, brain cells, than at any other time in the life of a human. Yes that is right; you had a proportionally bigger brain in your mother's womb than you do now. This maximum brain cell density is achieved between the third and sixth month of gestation. However, even though every-

one is born with about as many neurons as they will ever have, they still have fewer cells than in utero due to prenatal pruning, which is when the body gets rid of unneeded brain cells, with or without your permission. Thankfully, this loss in neural density is offset by a thickening of the myelin sheaths. So no, the fetal you was not Einstein, as much as a twisted sense of pride may want. Everyone, no matter how old, teenagers or adults, is constantly getting wiser, with or without the added brain cells.

"Stay out of my life!"

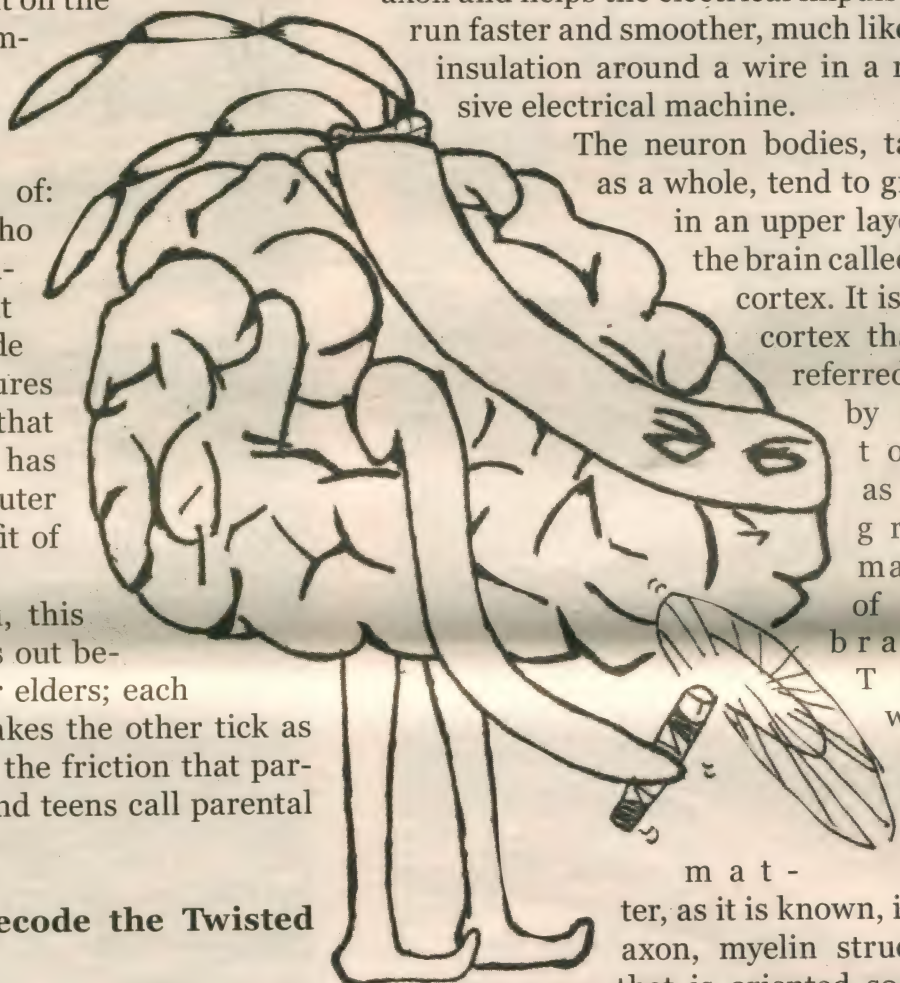
What parents must understand is that their care may make a huge difference physiologically, but when it comes to brain chemistry, there is nothing they can do. It is a fact that the brain develops in the teenage years and brings about some emotional eddies from dating troubles to impatience. Doctors have now discovered that this same process of myelin growth and neural pruning happens again during the teenage year. Life, researchers are learning, is not only traumatic because of the massive amounts of work, responsibility, and emotional stimuli dumped upon young adults, but because their brains are ill equipped to handle such tumultuous things. While a teen may know that he is acting like a jerk to his parents, they have no logical outlet to release their pent up frustration.

First there is a second "growth spurt in pre-pubescent and pubescent children", said Brown. Then Mother Nature goes to work with her pruning clippers during an uncontrollable cleaning spree while consistently forgetting to give teens a crutch to lean on; tough luck.

"I remember! It's you old people that have the bad memories."

Even as teens lose their metaphysical minds, the brain develops more neural pathways, which are groups or strings of neurons that are responsible for a certain thought process or action. Think of them as the beaten path. People tend to stay on the beaten path unless convinced not to for some reason, just as people tend to think the same types of thoughts unless forced to make a new neural pathway. "Yes, quite an endorsement for homework," commented Brown.

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Hurricane Hits Home

Former Acalanes student caught in the debree

By Thomas Maher
Staff Writer

Startled by his roommate's frantic preparation before leaving in the early hours of the morning, Andrew DeLaPena, a 2005 Acalanes graduate, woke up in the midst of Hurricane Katrina. Although his roommate left, Andrew stayed in his quiet dorm room, assured that Katrina would not live up to the hype the news had awarded it. In the small room with the clock flashing one AM, Andrew tried to fall asleep. Finally, disrupted by rain, howling winds, and the sound of trees being strewn across campus, Andrew gave in to Katrina at around ten AM on Sunday.

After he dressed and gathered his belongings, he ran outside in a panic to find himself amongst the last few remaining students and faculty waiting. Amidst howling winds, and on and off rain, DeLaPena and fellow students gathered in a circle and an unknown administrator started a prayer. Andrew reflected upon the moment; "I'm not a religious person, but all the winds from the north were heading south into the hurricane at about thirty miles per hour and it was a very intense spiritual moment." As the prayer ended the awaited bus approached and everyone piled in.

It was hard to imagine that only a few months ago DeLaPena graduated from Acalanes, ready to begin the next stage of his life. Like other graduates, DeLaPena was asked to leave his old life that he had grown so accustomed to and venture off into the world of higher education. DeLaPena thought he had his life figured out and was about to embark on an adventure at a new school to have the time of his life.

DeLa Pena's family and former classmates were more than 2,000 miles away from his dorm room at Loyola University in New Orleans. While he was starting his classes and meeting new friends, news came of a Hurricane Katrina. Like many other students, DeLaPena did not take the news seriously and continued his daily life without a care. After a long Saturday, DeLaPena decided to go to sleep, not knowing what the rest of the weekend had in store for him.

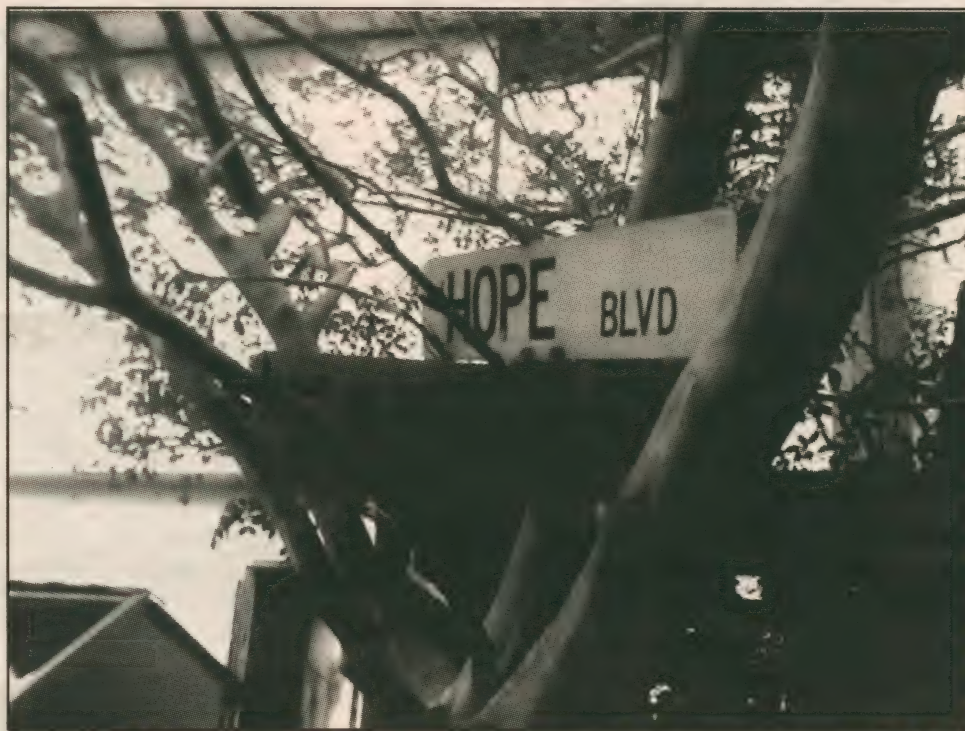
Andrew was startled by his roommate later that night and ran out of the dorm and gathered inside of a bus. On the way, Andrew and fellow students battled gale forced winds and slippery roads. As the driver fought to

control the bus over a bridge, Andrew gazed out the window. "We were stuck on this one bridge over this body of water and the storm was going on and rain like I've never seen it before and waves crashing over the bridge," he said. A usual one hour drive ended up being an everlasting six hours until they finally arrived in Baton Rouge.

After the bus dropped off Andrew and the rest of the traumatized people, it left to find other victims of Katrina. As Andrew entered the church, which had been turned into a Red Cross shelter for hurricane survivors, he looked upon hundreds of people sprawled across the floor, some were families and others were students. Many who were displaced from their families and homes were forced to leave with nothing but the clothes on their back. Andrew gazed around the church and he found a spot where he could stay.

Andrew took out his few possessions that were not destroyed in the hurricane and sat down in a cramped, uncomfortable space where he would wait out the storm. During the next five hours Andrew sat there in utter silence with his fellow refugees listening and waiting for any sign of the storm subsiding. As he and others sat, with no communication from the outside world, they waited for the storm to give into their pleading requests.

After hours of pounding rain and furious winds, the rain finally stopped and people stopped praying and some stood up to check outside. When Andrew walked outside he saw street signs bent, windows broken, and deserted streets. A night after only eating a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and some Kool-aid, Andrew decided to walk to a McDonalds which was almost four miles from the church. During the walk he saw a street sign up in a tree. The names of the streets were Hope and Faith. Andrews saw this as



Katrina's howling winds blew a street sign into tree branches in a suitable commentary.

a message to all the victims of the hurricane.

After another day at the shelter, Andrew was finally able to call his father who then purchased a plane ticket for Andrew to fly out of Baton Rouge back to the Bay Area. As he left the shelter, he saw more families entering the church along with people displaced from the Superdome where the roof had collapsed. In the airport, he found it very calm and was able to board his flight quite easily. As the plane left the ground he saw the massive disruption that Katrina had left across Louisiana.

When Andrew entered his old house, after being picked up by his father from the airport, he was in the same place as he was in when he graduated. With no belongings and no school to attend, Andrew's life was put on pause. Determined, Andrew found a way to continue his schooling and is now attending University of San Francisco. Andrew felt very lucky and has started to appreciate his family, friends, and his own life more. DeLaPena realized that when he gazed at the street signs that left such a memorable impression on him, it has left him to wonder about his own hope and faith and whether it altered the outcome of his experience with Katrina.

Courtesy Photo/ Andrew DeLa Pena

feature

All That Jazz Going to Work

A Night of Jazz to Benefit the Victims of Katrina

By Arjun Srivasta
Staff Writer

The Acalanes Jazz Festival helped the school raise a school-wide total of at least \$6000 for Hurricane Katrina victims over the past three weeks. Students, teachers and parents packed the Acalanes Performing Arts Center to enjoy smooth, easy tunes and some pleasant New Orleans harmonies reminiscent of the French Quarter Blues, played by students. Donations of \$10 dollars were suggested, but the experience of the night was worth much more.

Held on September 22, the festival was put together by leadership advisor Cathy Challacombe and the leadership class. The night began with the melodic pianism of junior Greg Weitzman, who played a piece from his Summer Breeze suite. "All the money went to a good cause," said Weitzman, "there is always something for us to give relief aid to." The event also showcased the group Airtime, formed by Acalanes students from different grades. After Airtime played some fine, smooth jazz, the leadership class came out to the end of each aisle, holding collection bags. While everyone was donating, Acalanes graduate and Tulane student Kathryn Briscoe spoke with the audience about her firsthand experience of the tragedy, offering perspective on how we all should collectively learn from the disaster, and be strong.

The night rolled on with the lovely music of the Co-Co Quintet, named for its band members from different places in the Contra Costa County. The music ended with a magnificent performance by senior Kyle



The sweet sounds of New Orleans resonate in the Acalanes Performing Arts Center in a student effort to raise money for hurricane relief.

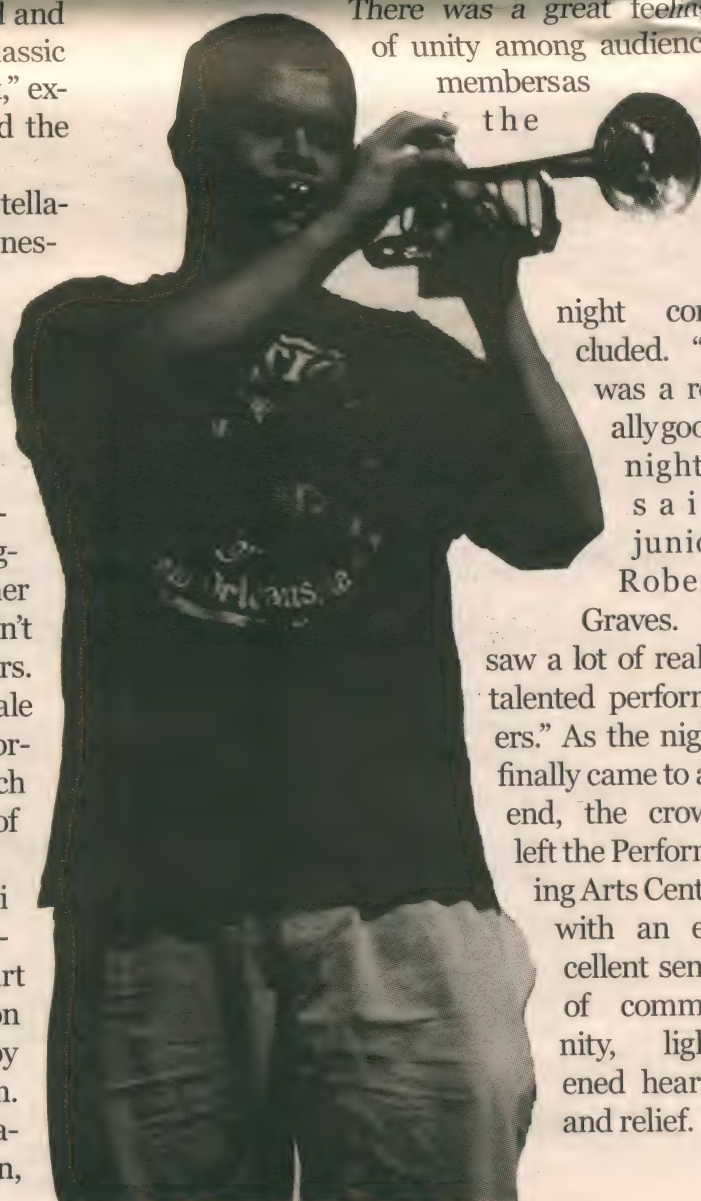
Athayde's Quartet. For their last song, "When the Saints Come Marching In," Stanley Middle School band teacher and Kyle's father, Bob Athayde joined the group. During the finale the audience clapped and swayed vivaciously to the beat of the classic Louisiana song. "It was a good turnout," explained Kyle Athayde. "People enjoyed the concert and they got really into it."

The festival also featured a "Stella-Screaming" contest referring to Tennessee William's A Streetcar Named Desire. For five dollars, daring audience members could stand up on the stage and pretend to be Marlon Brando for 15 seconds, screaming Stella at the top of their lungs. Six audacious spectators came up and participated, lightening the atmosphere and encouraging English and leadership teacher Mrs. Challacombe to join in. "I didn't plan to be a Stella yeller," said Mrs. Challacombe, "but we needed female representation [...] Students felt sorry for me that I had just made such a fool of myself—that is, outside of the classroom".

The festival also sold Mardi Gras masks painted by teacher Karen Carbone's honors art classes, and held a silent auction featuring an elegant painting by Acalanes graduate Alan Chin. "The disaster of Hurricane Katrina inspired me," said Chin,

who felt that it was his duty to contribute to this great cause. The acrylic painting was his interpretation of the city of New Orleans after the disaster, and sold for around \$2000.

There was a great feeling of unity among audience members as the



night concluded. "It was a really good night," said junior Robert Graves. "I saw a lot of really talented performers." As the night finally came to an end, the crowd left the Performing Arts Center with an excellent sense of community, lightened hearts, and relief.



Fitter not Fatter

Acalanes and the growing fight against fat

By Oscar Cuming-Timms
Staff Writer

Of all the problems that plague the modern high-school student only one is getting bigger and bigger. California's students are among the fattest in the US, but Acalanes students don't yet fit that heavy trend. Even though we are slimmer than average, our education system is changing. The foods we eat at school have changed, sodas have left the campus and school now teaches us how to eat right. Our state education system is addressing the pressing matter of obesity and our school district is following suit. But we are different with good reason.

In our society today we are trained to think that skinny translates to beauty. An Acalanes student who chose to remain anonymous classifies ideal beauty as "what you see on a poster in a mall somewhere. Some skinny person that looks like they don't have any internal organs." Clearly, the public conception of beauty does not match up with the reality.

The percentage of overweight and obese children is steadily climbing and schools are having to come to terms with this growing problem. In 1965, the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) reported that four percent of children ages six to eleven were overweight (see chart 1). By 1976 that figure almost doubled, jumping to seven percent. And in the 2002 survey that percentage more than doubled, filling out to a hefty sixteen percent.

In the Healthy Kids Survey conducted by WestEd, strong evidence was found that correlates physical activity and good nutrition directly to academic performance. The study, which encompasses schools throughout California, found a significant increase in test scores of healthy students. The 2003 report states that "physical activity and nutrition had equally beneficial consequences for

test scores in low- and high-performing schools." Students who ate breakfast and had nutritious intake during the day exhibited a rise in test scores, as did students who got a healthy amount of physical exercise each day. The Presidents Council on Physical Fitness and Sports recommends that adolescents and adults get "20 minutes of aerobic activity, such as running, jogging, or dancing."

Looking at the student population of Acalanes and its sister schools in the Acalanes School District, it becomes apparent that we are different from the

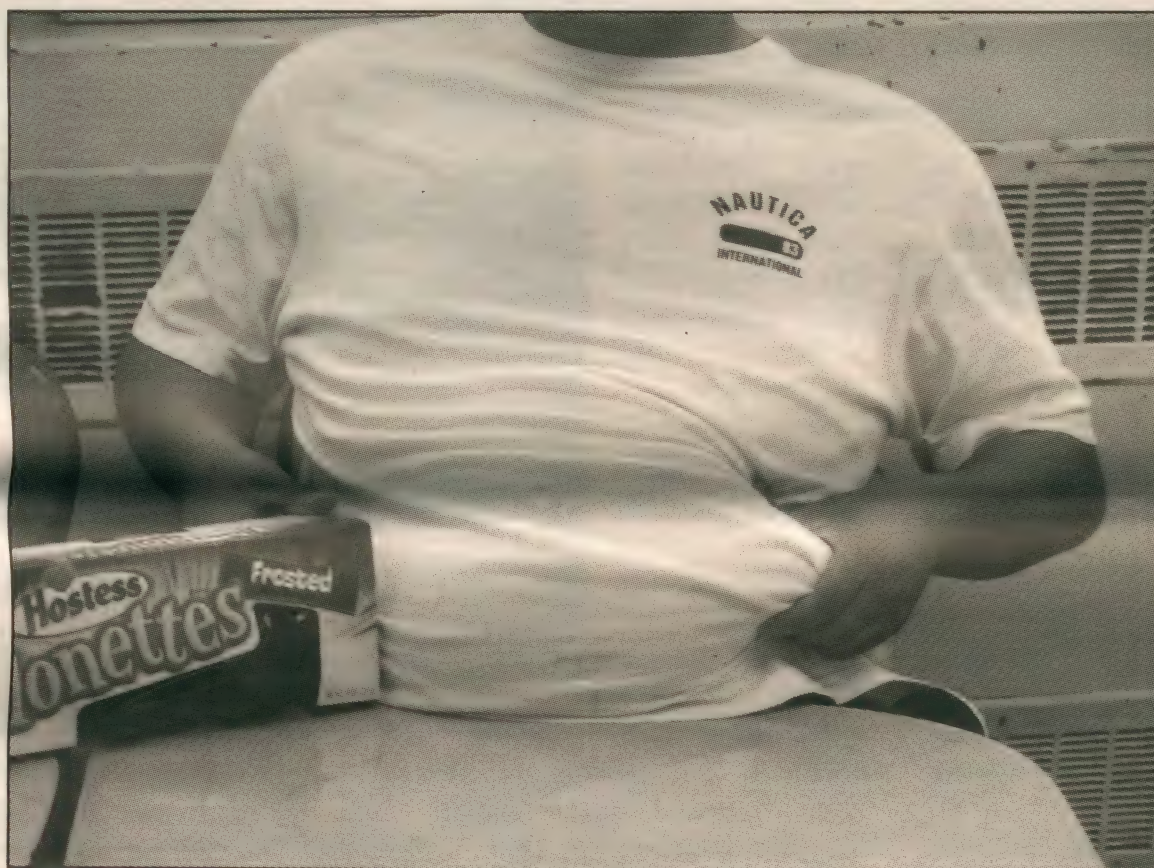
our schools. The food sold in Californian schools is changing for the better and becoming healthier due to legislation Senate Bill 12, signed into Californian law by Governor Schwarzenegger just weeks ago on September 15, 2005. "As of today, California schools are no longer in competition with the local mini-mart," declared California Center for Public Health Advocacy Executive Director Dr. Harold Goldstein in a press release on the day of the signing of the historic bill. California now has the most rigorous standards for school food in the entire United States, a necessary step in the fight against obesity.

SB 12 was quickly followed by its sister bill, SB 965, which was signed on the same day. A similar bill was signed a few years ago, banning sodas in elementary and middle schools. SB 965 will have the same effect in high schools. California schools must comply with both bills by July 1, 2007, but many schools are already taking action to protect the health of their students.

Acalanes

will comply with the new standards set by the deadline, changing the types of foods served to many future students.

Barbara Dietsch, a research associate for California's Healthy Kids Survey, believes the actions necessary to fighting obesity should not stop at the changing of meals served at school. She emphasizes that "many schools are establishing gardens on campus that are linked to academic courses such as science. This allows students hands-on experiences of growing food, learning how to prepare it and share it



Maybe there is valid cause for taking fast foods out of the cafeteria after all...

average. Only a small percentage of our students are overweight and even fewer obese. Dvora Citron, the school nurse at Acalanes says that "we don't have the average problem that the rest of the country and probably our state are complaining about [we] live in a middle to upper class socio-economic area and we don't have much poverty at all, and people are very aware of what good nutrition is." It is for those reasons that she and many others believe that it will "correlate with a low incidence of obesity," so we don't see it as a big threat.

In an attempt to combat the rising percentage of overweight children in California, the state with the second highest rate of obesity in the nation, legal actions aimed at controlling food from

Blueprint Photo/Aaron Berry

feature

Returning to the Heart of Teaching in South America

Acalanes teacher experiences joys and pains of teaching in Chile

By Emma Chastain

Staff Writer

Acalanes Spanish teacher Elizabeth Gough left California in July of 2004 to teach in a public school in Chile through a teacher exchange program. Gough was an English teacher at an all girls public school in Chillán, a town in central Chile. "There are still a lot of single sex public schools in Latin America," explained Gough, because when the public education system was established in the 1800s, most of Latin America was Catholic, and they felt the need to separate the two sexes.

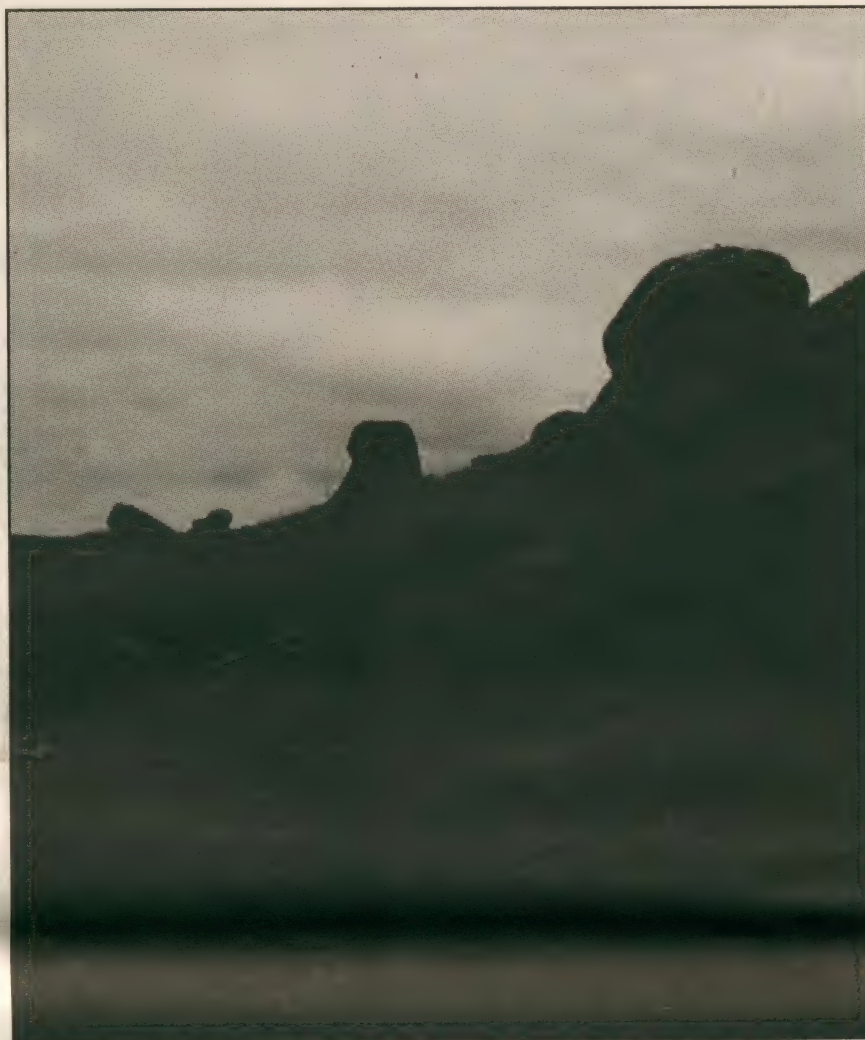
River shrimp in Chile are really muddy. While slurping the shrimp juice mixture, you also get a nice mouthful of mud. "That was not my favorite," said Gough, reminiscing about the Chilean culture she came to love over the past year.

Chile, a South American country 2,456 miles long but only 110 miles wide, welcomed Gough with open arms. While she didn't appreciate some of the more far-fetched meals, she enjoyed all other Chilean food. She discovered the typical snack item in southern Chile was smoked mussels and clams on strings that people eat like "popcorn or potato chips here." Gough also made all her Chilean friends dine at rustic restaurants because she found them so charming; she managed to absorb Chilean culture to her very bone.

The students themselves, of course, were different from their Acalanes counterparts. Gough quickly learned from her students that they had never received English homework before. However, she was also quick to point out that "this high school isn't like a lot of other high schools in Chillán; it was probably less focused on college." While Gough estimates that about 97% of Acalanes graduates will continue on to college, only 7% of the Chillán graduates at that school will continue. Therefore she felt that for a lot of the students it was more important to attend school to learn the basics for a vocation. "In each of my classes I had a girl who was either pregnant or had been pregnant and already had a kid, so the focus of their day was entirely different." Unlike teen problems for Lamorinda students, these real life distractions made it nearly impossible for students to have the opportunity to devote themselves to their education.

These differences were made very apparent to Gough when she began to realize how of her students was physically suffering. One of Gough's colleagues in Chile once told her that he knew which of his students were starved. The girls were supposed to wear uniforms in order to mask this inequality, yet Gough found that there were other signs "like the girl who had just flinched a little bit when she saw another girl toss a very brown banana in the trash."

Gough also encountered new difficulties in teaching. All she was provided with was a "whiteboard, desks, chairs; that's it." Her inquiries found that neither additional materials nor students past work was available. Very few teachers actually had teaching lessons written out or recorded, and the school was chronically low on supplies. Part of this was due to the inaccessibility of technology at the school to write and record the lessons with. Although the students were provided with a computer lab, all the teachers were supposed to share one computer in the faculty lounge without internet access. On top of this trial, photocopies--a staple of the Acalanes teaching curriculum--were virtually nonexistent. If a teacher wanted a photocopy for his student, he was supposed to go into town to find a copy machine and pay for it himself. "We were supposed to ask the students for money to reimburse us, and of course the students didn't have that kind of money all the time," said Gough,



Gough enjoys the beautiful scenery of Macchu Picchu and the Moai Heads of Easter Island

Courtesy Photo/ Elizabeth Gough

who ended up spending a lot of her own money providing learning materials to her students that many at Acalanes might take for granted. Overall though, Gough felt "it was a good experience for me because I just had to build a program myself." She returned to the very heart of teaching and started fresh.

The highly disadvantaged state of the school Gough worked at is atypical for Chile. Although at one time it had been considered one of the best public schools in Chile, during the 1980s the Chilean government started a private school program that gutted the public schools. Students in Chile took certain tests that helped them gain scholarships toward private schools. Most Chilean students are extremely pressured to take that route. This was similar in Gough's mind to the Advanced Placement classes at Acalanes which many students feel compelled to take simply because everyone else is enrolled.

The teaching experience was very dif-

ferent from that at Acalanes, however. The Chill n school operated on a block schedule, where students had a different grouping of classes each day. Also, instead of the students walking and rotating classes, the teachers had to move classrooms. This left Gough feeling slightly frazzled as she had to transport all of her materials for the next class from room to room.

The justification for the students staying in one class all day long was so that the girls built a comradery among themselves, and so that they would have a real sense of belonging with a group. While she appreciated that closeness among the girls she felt that it encouraged cheating: "There's no way a girl, when she's been in the same homeroom class with the same girls all day long for four years, isn't going to bend into peer pressure." Gough felt Acalanes had a better system where a teacher can establish himself or herself in a classroom so that she will not be the outsider coming into an already established group, as she felt in Chile.

The Chileans' impressions of Americans were that we were incredibly cold-hearted, while Chileans thought of themselves as a much warmer culture. "I thought that's such an exaggeration and not true." However, Gough did admit that some of their etiquette did give off a warmer feeling that the very formal ones in the United States. Whenever



Courtesy Photo/ Elizabeth Gough

Acalanes counselor DeeDee Worthing visits Chill n and enjoys her warm reception from local teachers and administrators

meeting someone or upon leaving, the customary gesture was a kiss on the cheek. "It didn't matter if you're mad at that person, you still are going to kiss that person and embrace them," Gough relates, "that's just courtesy."

This warm Chilean hospitality followed her home in the form of gifts for her brother, mother, all of her close, immediate family from the friends she had made in Chile over the year. "They just assumed that these are close relatives of mine, and they know me, so they should

give gifts to my family," said Gough.

It was this warmth and sentimentality that Gough appreciated most from her time spent in Chile. She returned to Lafayette with small gifts from her students at Chile, framed

photographs of themselves and other small tokens. Gough felt Acalanes students appreciated talking and looking to their peers for leadership, while in Chile that her students appreciated connecting with an adult instead. It was this connection that warmed Gough's heart as she showed off the photos and other gifts given to her during the presentation of her trip on Wednesday, September 21.

Gough noticed that the Chileans were fairly supportive of the United States, and in all respects were fairly pro-American. Chileans tended to be either neutral or positive, and that made Gough feel safe to be North American there. "Chileans treat young female Americans very well."

Most importantly, she felt that living in a foreign country not only made her appreciate the things in the United States, but also helped her see what she loved most about other parts in the world. Gough also learned what she loved most about Lafayette and the United States is educational system, the professionalism, and the cooperative spirit of her colleagues.



Courtesy Photo/ Elizabeth Gough

"Profe" Gough enjoys an afternoon walk with a friendly llama and her student Camila Jovannet while in Chile

feature

A Veteran of Education presents innovative philosophy

Superintendent Jim Negri's Plans for Change and Unification at Acalanes

By Alissa Chastain
Feature Editor

Jim Negri is a man with answers. Having already survived one year as superintendent of the Acalanes Union High School District, veteran Negri is now returning with big plans and even bigger ideas. "I came in last year during the parcel tax, so last year was primarily just fiscal planning," said Negri. "This year knowing that the finances are done [...] we are embarking on what is referred to as a 'strategic plan.'" Moraga, Orinda and Walnut Creek already have strategic plans in place.

Negri is leading a "strategically planned" march to unify the goals of the teachers, school, and district of Acalanes. Negri is attempting to create, "a long range look at what we want for this district," as he stands outspoken and impassioned, and the picture of a dignified businessman or CEO adorning a black suit, purple tie with a friendly smile. According to Negri, the plan is the crucial to A.U.H.S.D.'s survival as a statewide leader in education. As part of this plan the district has already hired two consultants and appointed "core team" that will develop visions and strategic goals for the district. He also plans to have online surveys for students, parents and faculty as well as hold town hall meetings to gather in-put on Acalanes Union High School District schools. This data will be taken and combined with academic performance to shape "strategic goals" given to teams to work on. This is the third district that Negri has done strategic planning in. According to his experience, "It really does drive everything in a positive direction when it is

done well." He hopes that the strategic plan will create an "organization that is running with common purpose, not just running." Another focus of this year will be evaluating the consistency

exist."

Negri's philosophy on education has been molded by his experiences both as a teacher and student. As a former social studies teacher, Negri believes in the value of history: "You have to know where you came from [...] if you're not a voter already, you will be [...]. A quality education system is the heart of a democratic society."

Negri has a particularly difficult job as Superintendent of the Acalanes Union High School District: he is responsible for five different communities. Not only must he work five times as hard as many other members of the school faculty, but he is subject to the whims of the school board. It is enough to make anyone run out of their office screaming, but as Negri leans forward intently, a glimmer of hope can be seen in his eyes as he glances at his computer screen ready to get back to work. In his motivational start of the year speech, he ends with a quote from Tallulah Bankhead: "I read Shakespeare and the Bible, and I can shoot dice. That's what I call a liberal education."

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Blueprint Photo/ Bryan Schnugg

Superintendent Jim Negri explains his plans for the upcoming school year.

and value of the grading system at Acalanes. A grading committee has already been formed to discuss issues in the grading system and ways of improvement. Above all, Negri insists that students are clearly the most important part of all of this planning; after all, "that's why we

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Ask Acalanes

Homecoming is to Acalanes as...

By Aaron Berry
Feature Editor



Freshman Amelia Harband

"Homecoming is to Acalanes as fish are to water."

As most students lay comatose, snuggled comfortably in their beds at home, the leadership class, aided by parent and student volunteers bustled around the Acalanes hallways. It was 10 AM on a Sunday morning, but not a single complaint was voiced as students danced and joked as they decorated the school in celebration of homecoming. Loud speakers blasted rap, rock, oldies, and everything in between while students bobbed their heads, in a tireless effort to remodel the entire

campus. From sun up to sun down these dedicated souls slaved tirelessly for one reason: to recreate a moment almost as magical as when ET first touches Elliott's heart.

After a very tumultuous last couple of weeks for the Lafayette community, many hope that the events will be uplifting. Parent volunteer Ann Pinedo



Sophomore Dexter "Stud" Masland

"Homecoming is to Acalanes as lamb is to tunafish."



"Homecoming is to Acalanes as peanut butter is to jelly."

has *Back to the Future*, the sophomores, *Indiana Jones*, the juniors, *Jaws* and the seniors, *Hook*. Since early September the Acalanes student body representatives and leadership class have been working hard to make homecoming an enjoyable experience for everyone. "It's been a really stressful last couple of weeks for everyone," says senior and rally board member Steffen Ryge. "We all came together and it was a great experience. I hope this turns out well."

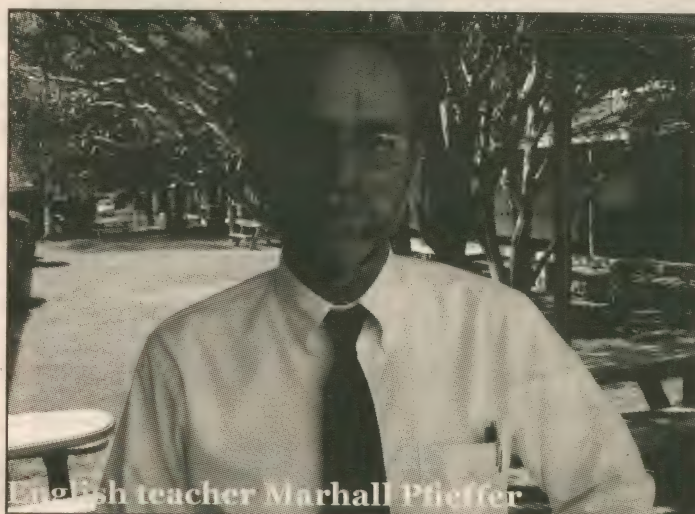


Senior Terence Chen

Homecoming is to Acalanes as the Black Plague is to life."

predicts "everyone will have a great time!" as she stands enthusiastic yet exhausted, covered in paint.

The overall theme for this year's Homecoming is Steven Spielberg movies, and each grade has its own sub-section. The freshman class



English teacher Marhall Pfeiffer

"Homecoming is to Acalanes as a fine desert is to a steak dinner."

feature

Fitter not Fatter

Continued from pg 15

with other students and teachers." She also stresses that exposure to the experience of preparing healthy food should also come from the home and that it is vital that education in such matters come from both the home and the school.

Measures to increase the health of the student population in California are a step in the right direction, but the reason for the relatively low percentage of obesity in our school may not be directly influenced by such measures. In our area we are introduced to healthy eating habits from a young age. Our families have enough money to pay for the healthier but more expensive meals. Mrs. Citron believes that "eating one meal a day, [at least], with your family is a very healthy way to transmit healthy nutrition values on a regular basis." But without our socio-economic climate, we would not be able to afford the more expensive healthier foods.

Kids who ate breakfast and had nutritious intake during the day exhibited a rise in test scores, as did students who got a healthy amount of physical exercise each day

It is not just our money, but our lifestyle. The populace of the Acalanes School District is highly athletic and that athleticism is focused on maintaining our health. In our area, a large portion of the obese high-schoolers are also athletic. "There are kids out there who are obese but they're very physically active and they have great self esteem," explains Mrs. Citron.

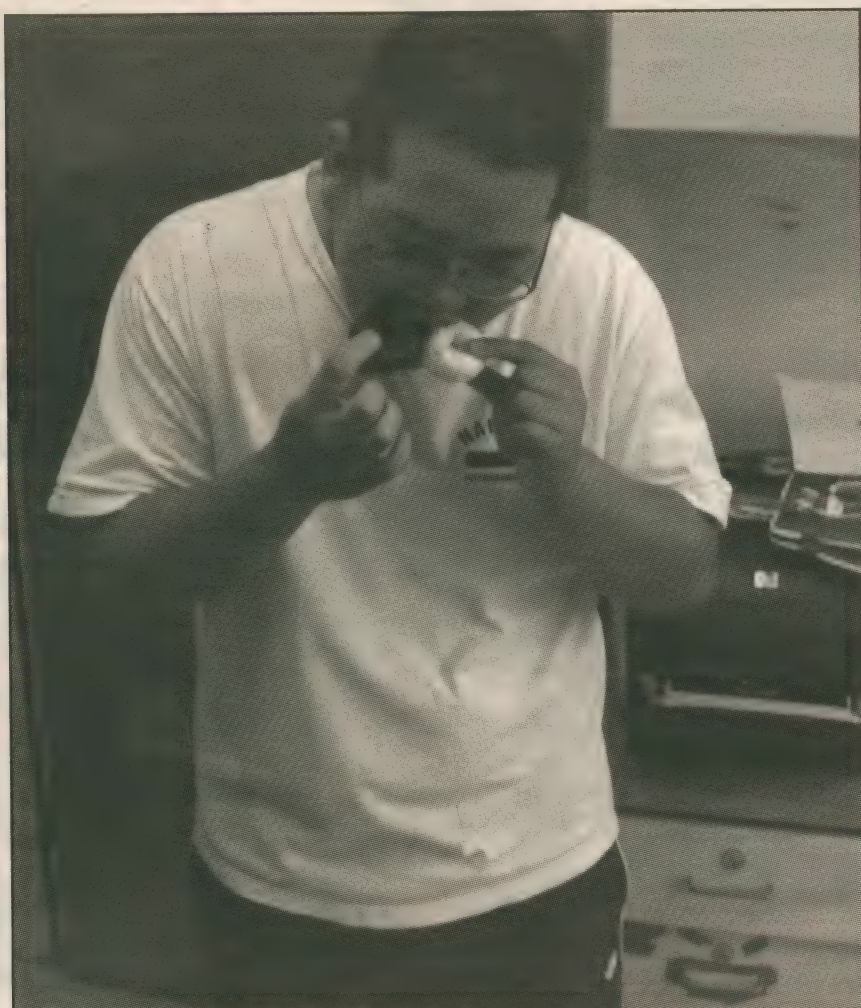
So, for the moment, our school populace is safe from the growing menace of obesity. Although many of us will never be overweight and even fewer obese, we must continue to maintain a healthy diet in order to preserve the way of life that we are so accustomed to. Ultimately, food choices are up to the consumer, but as healthy dietary habits are taught more frequently at the high school level, knowledge of the right choices will become more widespread.

Teen Brain

Continued from pg 12

One of things that Doctors have learned is that the language centers of the brain develop much earlier than was previously thought. If doctors ruled the school system, then students would star language classes long before seventh grade according to Dr. Arthur Toga of the UCLA medical center, the man who takes Dr. Giedd's data and turns into the recognizable pictures. Still, "the schools are too politicized to implement any changes at this time," said Dr. Toga. Such remarks from doctors Brown and Toga serve to reinforce the tenant of "use it or lose it," according to Associate Principal Janet Carlson, who used to teach a psychology course.

While this trailblazing pathway process is most prevalent in younger people, people past this prime growth age still make new pathways and grow myelin, it is simply a longer and much slower process. Although the neural pruning and myelin growth are two important steps in brain development, they do not simply constitute the whole of the growth in teenage years. These two processes do not on their own indicate a lack of maturity; that is left up to the overall status or level of brain maturation.



Blueprint Photo-Illustration/Aaron Berry

Junior Alex Wu powers down powder bombs in a demonstration of unhealthy eating habits.

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Are our R's their R's?

The Absurdity of Movie Ratings

For Centuries, a troubled American culture and society has struggled to define itself. Like popular books and music before it, the modern movie has become the litmus paper for the greatness of our great culture.

The movie now flies as the standard below which we proudly stand in blind admiration. We fail to see that the thing, which we hold up to be an accurate impression of ourselves, is no longer within the range of our control. The rating system we use to keep the really scary and inappropriate movies out of the hands and minds of 5 year olds.

The rating system for movies is well known to all children waiting for their parents 'okay' to watch the movie with the strangely attractive rating of 'R'.

responsibility to prevent their children from viewing a warped and hollow view of sex, the censorship of a non-sexual part of the body remains prudish and puritanical.

The way in which the human body is shown in the movies deserves a second chance at the rating scale. Nudity is seldom if ever genuinely pornographic and usually consists of a person stepping out of a shower and grabbing a towel seconds later. The way in which these movies are presented by their ratings is teaching us that we should be ashamed of our own bodies but should embrace and encourage violence as an entertaining pastime.

However, when it comes to public television



Guest Cartoon/Steven Chan

For those not in the know, the rating system starts with 'G', a letter that declares that this movie may in fact be so appropriate that it will make your eyes burn with cheery goodness. 'G' is followed by 'PG' and 'PG13' which both denote that parents should monitor the movie before they allow their 6th grader to see it. Next in line for inappropriateness is 'R', ever coveted by middle school kids and those who can't quite pull off looking like a 17 year-old.

However, movies that are now reaching the 'restricted' range are getting out of hand. Until recently, you could go to a PG movie with your little sister without having to take her 'to the bathroom' every 10 minutes when she gets too scared. People in movies fire round after round of bullets into each other but since there is no visible blood, its not rated 'R'. To an impressionable child, these harmless fire-fights make guns appear to be little more than water pistols. Unfortunately, nearly 1700 children die each year due to the accidental misuse of a firearm.

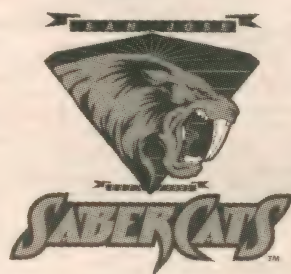
In contrast to an obvious lack of care the members of the rating board show in their dealings with Hollywood violence, they deal with sex in quite the opposite way.

Movie sex is so heavily censored that a bare body part as benign as a buttock will send movies packing into the furthest reaches of the 'R' jungle.

Though many parents agree that it is their

these standards of censorship are seldom if ever applied. Shows like Nip-Tuck and Rescue Me on FX are far more graphic than anything that you will find in a PG13 movie. It's absurd that you can show graphic surgeries, gratuitous sex, drug use, and severe violence on basic cable television but the mere mention of a breast is considered taboo and cause for a stricter rating that may result in loss of revenue for filmmakers because of a more limited viewing audience.

In the not-so-famous words of Ney Grants, a concerned parent of two, "it would be wonderful if people had some common sense about what should be shown and what shouldn't be." So now it comes down to the faithful views of the modern movie; are our "R's" their "R's"?



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Are you Interested in writing an editorial to be published in Blueprint? Stop by room 209, and talk to Freeman or an editor.

We want to hear from you!

Permanent Status

There is no M-O-T-I-V-A-T-I-O-N in the word T-E-N-U-R-E

By Victor Karadi
Staff Writer

Tenure (or Permanent Status as it's referred to legally in K-12) brings back warm feelings into my heart as I reflect upon my seventh grade Stanley days. During that time, I had one of the worst teachers of my grade school career. Days consisted of being scolded by my teacher, then filling out worksheets that would make one feel like they'd been put in remedial English. After eight glorious months of mind-numbing activities, I slipped through the academic bureaucracy to the 8th grade, having learned basically nothing and feeling idiotic enough to think that "idiotic" was a real word. What was this glorious system that allowed my seventh grade teacher to get away with teaching basically nothing? Tenure.

Tenure started in 1909 when Stanford economics professor Edward Ross made an unpopular comment about the gold standard in the US which cost him his job. Professors rallied behind him against what was a blatant threat to freedom of speech in the classroom. The American Association of University Professors (AAUP) was formed to protect teachers' rights to freedom of speech, inquiry, and to do research without fear of losing their job because of negative public opinion. The AAUP established tenure as a way to protect academic freedom, and provide some level of job security for teachers.

But wait, what did academic freedom have to do with me getting short-changed in middle school? Well that academic freedom ensures that I get

the best education anyone can get, by freeing my teacher of the pressure of meeting standards so she can pursue topics of interest and further enhance

and incompetence is often overlooked.

"On a hearing panel a woman had a fifth grade class and kids were setting fires in the back room and they still couldn't remove her for incompetence" remarked Acalanes School district Superintendent Jim Negri. He continued, "It's practically impossible to remove a teacher from a teaching job in California unless they've committed an outright crime." Utter incompetence is only a crime against the education system and not the law.

Does this mean we should we get rid of permanent status in K-12? Of course not. Teachers need some sort of protection from unfounded claims by students and parents, and teaching in perpetual fear of

losing your job in counterproductive. What we really need is support for new teachers in their first years so we don't have to deal with their incompetence late when we can't get rid of them.

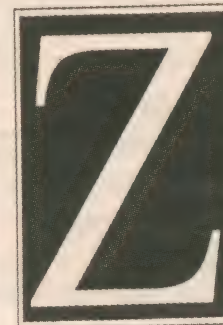
So the next time you complain that your teacher has the credentials of a sea cow, thank tenure.



Courtesy Editorial Cartoon/ Bob Louis

my learning. Everyone knows if teachers feel loosely obliged to teach what is desired of them they'll teach better. Similarly if you tell students they don't have to do work they'll be more productive. But if teachers live in perpetual fear of losing their jobs, they're likely to teach poorly.

Undoubtedly, she was spending every waking moment researching how to better my education. Academic freedom applies loosely to the purpose of tenure at the K-12 level. More importantly, in high schools, tenure provides job security for teachers. Shielding teachers from insane soccer moms convinced that Timmy is getting a C in math because Mrs. Blank is racist as opposed to Timmy just being stupid and lazy. Then again, it seems that students' complaints concerning teachers (true or not) are usually shrugged off,



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Social Fault-Lines

Too Much Stuff, Too Little Life

By **Ellie Fox**
Opinion Editor

Hurricane Katrina exposed the inequality that exists in the country, but I was slapped in the face with that inequality all summer in a different kind of unnatural man made disaster. Between putting on a summer camp for homeless children and working in a (bottomless pit of cheery despair) store called Build-A-Bear Workshop, it became apparent that we are sitting on a fault-line far greater than the San Andreas; we are stuck on top of a fault line of social disparities as well.

In Walnut Creek, Young Suburban Professional (yuppie) families march through Build-a-Bear in an endless procession of "Madisons" and "Blakes" (the two names which, after careful study, I have concluded are those most widely assigned by Yuppie parents to their offspring) willingly spending more money than I would make in a week on one purchase.

Of course dear little Fluffy the Bear needs high-tops (now sadly, made in China by Nike; king of all things corporate and socially darwinistic) to match his outfit.

Come on people, designer sneakers for a teddy bear? That's like buying a surfboard for camel breeders in the Sahara; the only thing it's useful for is fighting off vultures.

What's more sardonic is that less than ten miles away, there are kids living in homeless shelters who don't have real sneakers for themselves. Yet, somehow they are still happy (Imagine that, happy without being overindulged in a torrential downpour of material goods? Go figure...) These kids have lived in situations where they did not have nearly anything, and now that their lives have started to come back together, that old Mary Poppins phrase holds true: "Enough is as good as a feast."

Unfortunately, we don't live in a Disney (Build-a-Bear's sister company) world, and these days we don't generally follow the advice of crazy women with weird hats and talking umbrellas. However, not all the blame should go to the parents for wanting their kids to have the nicest or

newest toy. And it is really not the fault of Build-a-Bear for existing and thus causing an incurable scar upon my soul (they did, in all fairness, contribute some bears for the shelter birthday parties). The real problem is that all too many of us think we need this stuff.

Advertising perpetually stokes our burning desire to hunt and gather more awesome stuff than anybody else on the block. Well, maybe not the hunt part because it's trendy to belong to PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), but you get the idea.

When you grow up bombarded by ads on TV, Internet, cell phones, and the radio, and a floodtide of bankroll it seems natural that we might as well purchase as



Courtesy Editorial Cartoon/Bob Louis

much cool stuff as we possibly can (and some that we can't - but that's the beauty of credit cards.) Unfortunately, this super-saturation of witty catch-phrases that make us want to buy designer soap can lead to an inability to discern how much "real beauty" we actually get from buying Dove brand.

If you've seen *Fight Club*, hopefully you'll understand the point I'm trying to make. A duvet is not necessary for our survival, nor is that ying-yang shaped coffee table from Ikea or that extra outfit for Fluffy the Bear, yet from the miracle of advertising/brain-washing we have begun to feel that to be successful we must surround ourselves with as many Gucci-Prada-Lacoste-Moschino-Bebe accessories as possible without a second thought to how we could be more productively wasting our money and time.

Now that the coverage of Katrina, last year's tsunami, and the recent 7.6 earth-

quakes in Pakistan have called attention to human suffering to an inescapably broad scale, let's take a look beyond the tragedy in the south and focus on the problems we haven't dealt with at home. This racial and class divide is a far from isolated phenomenon and just sending \$50 to the Red Cross is not going to give you immunity. Charity begins at home and although many people may never see it, there really is a great need even in Contra Costa County. As of last summer there were 58 children living permanently in Contra Costa shelters and 750 families on a waiting list to get in.

So next time you feel a little down and your inner glutton calls for a therapeutic shopping spree, consider how many pairs of shoes you already have and t-shirts

you never wear (you know, the ones that you get for free from your Dad's office Christmas party). Go ahead and tally how much you would spend buying new stuff and finally (if you're feeling adventurous), add a couple bucks in there to make up for the waste that you are responsible for by not using what you already have.

Now let's add all that up. Personally, I have figured that if I had not bought new sneakers last weekend,

I could have donated the \$34.95 for shoes that I can do without (I'm not even talking about the \$995 black leather Dolce and Gabbana metallic leather knee boots from Bergdorf Goodman; They've got to be made from the skin of Seabiscuit or the Dali Lama's personal herd of cows to be that expensive). Then \$2.99 for the gallon of gas that it takes me to get to Ross and back, and finally I'd say at least \$50 as my penitence pay for wasting (by not wearing) 9 other pairs of shoes. Last week, I should and could have donated approximately \$87.94...

Maybe we should build-a-life instead of a bear.

opinion

Pro

It Seems Intelligent Design Isn't So Scary After All

By Brenden Lehmen

Staff Writer

It is astounding that so much controversy looms over the topic of Intelligent Design and its place in public education. In the past century scientists promoting evolution have dominated disputes over the creation of life. However, it has recently become a heated debate between Darwinians, religious radicals, and a plethora of doctors, scientists and lawyers.

The Intelligent Design (ID) theory states "nature and complex biological structures were designed by intelligent beings and were not created by chance." It suggests that life on earth was created by someone or something, and did not come into existence merely by chance.

There are several key arguments among non-supporters based on arrogant assumptions, prejudice and just sheer ignorance all of which can be easily discredited with a little reasoning and knowledge on the subject.

The first argument is that Intelligent Design has absolutely no scientific core and therefore does not belong in a science class. This can be immediately discredited on the basis that ID is based on scientific research having to do with the creation and organization of DNA and other inter-cellular features.

Scientists have even the most such as bacteria of "irreducible" could not have from simpler ing simply, that at some point,

Another pop-against the in-schools is that ID bringing religion Although some

support it for that reason, the idea of ID is not innately religious. Just because ID suggests the existence of a supernatural entity does not imply that this entity should be worshiped or submitted to, as is the belief of most organized religions.

The whole basis of Intelligent Design is that evolution cannot be proven or disproven by scientific means. That is the whole meaning behind "supernatural." There are no valid arguments that can completely disprove ID, just as there is no way to disprove that a magical meatball or a purple flying orangutan created the universe exactly as it is today 33 trillion years ago.

Inclusion of Intelligent Design into school curriculum is really not as big of a deal as some may make it. It seems almost as if there is a fear of Intelligent Design; evolutionists ridicule it and make-up stupid names such as "un-intelligent design." At most, it would be a day's worth of material presented when evolution is first being formally introduced to students. ID would not be taught in classes, (excluding perhaps some in Kansas) as a fact, but merely another idea alongside other theories of creation. Its strengths, as well as weaknesses, could be explored, showing that it is just as rightfully valid an idea as evolution or even the giant magical meatball.

A main concern of many evolutionists is that ID would force children into a belief system without giving them access to other options or to allow them to make up their own minds. So then, should scientists really be finding a few dinosaur bones and then teaching the theory of evolution as a solid fact set in stone? Even if Intelligent Design seems sketchy, the theory of evolution is definitely not a fully proven fact either. People say that ID is just disguised Christianity, but it takes just as much faith to commit your beliefs to a theory such as evolution. To provide both strengths and weaknesses to all theories of the origin of life, teachers should provide as many legitimate ideas as are available.

Con

Religious Infiltration: Designed but not Intelligent

By Oscar Cumming-Timms

Staff Writer

The battle to bring religion back into education is fiercely raging once more. An early decision was made in the forming of public education in the United States to keep religion out of schools completely, but there is mounting pressure from the religious right wing for it to seep back in. Intelligent Design (ID) is the name of the latest conservative assault on education. If ID gets into schools it will open the flood gates for religion to enter into every classroom of our secular education system.

ID is a fake science attempts to explain came to be, and it ter to the widely enormously super-Evolution. ID ex-mankind with the primitive of explained by a higher on the earth for an

and shaped everything around us with the sole purpose of appeasing us as we go about our lives". The only shred of evidence that even approximates a scientific fact in use by ID to support its entire argument lies in our DNA. Supporters of ID reason that because DNA, the building blocks of life, is so incredibly complex, the only possible explanation for it is the age old assumption that another, more intelligent being created it.

After losing the line in the pledge of allegiance that claims we are "one nation under God," the latest defeat in a losing battle to teach religion in our schools, supporters of God are desperate to hold their ground and maintain the presence of religion in the classroom. The way they hope to do that is through science. They believe that if they can dress up their beliefs in scholarly robes, it will be allowed to rear its ugly head in the classroom. ID preaches religion without the name of the intelligent designer attached (an act considered to be blasphemy by some). Because it has almost no scientific base, it should not be taught in science classrooms in our schools.

The theory of ID has a very narrow scientific base, if any at all. To say that ID can be taught in a single day undermines the absence of substance. Unlike credible theories, ID does not explain the majority of known facts. We know that we can see the evolution of organisms in the fossil record, but ID fails to acknowledge this. We can see our genetic ancestors and their similarities to us, but ID fails to explain that too. We have been able to create the building blocks of life in conditions similar to the early earth, but some religious ID supporters go so far as to refute the fact that there was an early earth (more than 6,000 years old) at all. Evolution explains all this and we can see evolution in action. We can watch viruses as they evolve and adapt to changes in their environment, but ID fails once more to explain this simple observation. ID fails at every hurdle to explain the facts of life, but it still aspires to be called a legitimate theory.

Myths, legends and religions have always been there to help explain the unexplainable, but it has been proven time and time again that they do not hold up under the scrutinizing eye of science. The geocentric theory that was supported by religion was proven to be far from the truth. Blind faith like that shown by the supporters of ID is a very dangerous thing. Such blind faith has served to spark violent wars and millions have lost their lives because they fought for a belief that was unjustified.

The scientific method, the backbone of every theory (including evolution), has carried humanity so far in the last few hundred years, why would it fail us on this matter?

Supporters of God are desperate to hold their ground and maintain the presence of religion in the classroom.

tific theory that how mankind is a direct counter-accepted and rior theory of plains the rise of oldest and most nations: "we were power that put us unknown reason

People say that ID is just disguised Christianity, but it takes just as much faith to commit your beliefs to a theory such as evolution.

discovered that simple forms of life have thousands components that conceivably evolved structures, meaning life must have been designed.

ular argument stitution of ID in is a Trojan horse for into the classroom.

of these creationists

The Art and Wine-Wine-Wine Festival

A Weekend of Indulgence and Insights

By Robert Carrington
Entertainment Editor

Fathers, mothers, girls, boys, and even family pets came to walk the streets of our downtown neighborhood, enjoying the sights and smells of the Lafayette Toast, Taste and Toasted Festival. The biggest smiles in the crowd could be found on the faces of the many public imbibers whose features and psyches were as lit up as a child's face on Christmas morning. It was an especially blissful moment along the downward trek to the wine cellar of life.

Clenching two, three, sometimes even four wine glasses in one hand, they happily ambled and roved with a few stumbling and gesturing at all the artists' creations. With a trained eye and the debonair sophistication of Lamorinda, they critiqued the many fine works of art that TV couldn't show. "Hey Fred, check out the naked chick," said one connoisseur.

In some of the best planning I've ever seen, the artists were strategically placed past the wine and beer booths. Full of liquid confidence and a new appreciation for art, the revelers strode loftily into the waiting artists' eccentric clutches. I imagine it was a tough morning-after for many of these poor souls, waking up next to a ten-foot metal sculpture resembling shredded trash cans.

As a volunteer, all I could do was watch the sad spectacle, and sweep up fallen wine glasses from the fallen. It was hard work, but I was proud to wear the honorable apparel of a volun-

teer: A blue "Nerds-R'-Us" T-shirt. But I didn't sign up just for the pride of wearing and owning ennobling shirt. I was there because I felt in my soul a deep yearning, a duty to my fellow man, an indescribable feeling that I should—that I must get the community service hours required to pass history.

I was sent out at the ungodly hour of ten o'clock in the morning, to drag ice-bags to the booth owners. Others might have complained, but there was something special about these people that made it all worthwhile. I looked up after setting down my ice-bag, his

eyes met mine, we both smiled, and he said, "Took you long enough."

So the vendors weren't the kindest. Well, you just have to turn the other cheek. As someone wise once said, "Kill them with kindness." So, the next

time around, I brought my biggest smile. I walked up with a heart full of love, a spirit as light as a feather, and a metal baseball bat. I hope he knows a good dentist.

Even though I didn't get along with the vendors very well, I found that the other volunteers and I all seemed to share a spiritual connection without our share of tawny port or sherry. We were all very tired. We became a close-knit group, and, together, we shared our deepest feeling. It was the first time in my life I felt I could speak of the true pain and agony of my soul. "This sucks," I said.



Blueprint Cartoon/Christina Hirano

arts

ACALANES BLUEPRINT

Inside:

Senioritis Type 2

pg. 28

Due to a change in the general focus of Blueprint, and the fact that we couldn't fit the word "Entertainment" in the headline, this section has been renamed "Art." Big deal, I know.

Putting Happiness

Derek Emmons



Derek Emmons's art is always host to plenty of life. Great waves of greenery, noble animals, and a deep calm. All of Emmons's pieces seem to reflect what's inside his happy head. "I think being able to express yourself is going to bring you more happiness than money," said Emmons. However, Derek's art is a purely personal thing. "I don't think I'd ever become a professional artist. It's more for self-expression." That's how it's always been. "When I was a little kid, I didn't draw images really well, but I made sure to fill the page with color, because color is more important to me." While Emmons has obviously improved with his images, his attitude has stayed just as laid-back and passionate. "I guess I get my ideas from my head. I get inspired while I'm doing my art. I don't usually know what I'm doing when I start."



"I think being able to express yourself is going to bring you more happiness than money."

on Canvas

Acalanes Artists Profess their Love for their Work

Kaitlin Tiernan is going to be an artist for life. Skilled in all fields, she hopes to one day pursue graphic design. Although her work possesses a romantic air, it is her dead-on impressionistic style that reflects her favorite artists. "Monet and Van Gogh are probably my biggest influences," said Tiernan. Kaitlin has a large arsenal of artistic mediums to choose from, but can't help but confess, "I think I am most comfortable with acrylic." Tiernan's dreams of life-long art were readily apparent as she said, longingly, "I hope to do art professionally some day."

Kaitlin Tiernan



"I hope to do art professionally some day."

arts

Art and Wine Festival

Continued from pg 27

As the day wore on, we moved on, instead competing in fierce debates about who exactly would wear the crown of "Most Tired."

Me: Yeah, I was up until ten last night.

Alex: Well, I was up until twelve, and I had a football game.

Dave: I was working at a warehouse until two in the morning.

Aaron: I never sleep. And I'm fighting brain tumors, diabetes, an ear infection, and internal bleeding.

Needless to say, Aaron won the coveted title of "Most Tired." We were pretty pissed off when it turned out that Aaron was lying (he in fact only had a brain tumor and internal bleeding).

In the end, however hard and unpleasant the weekend was, I must admit I learned a lot. The moral I gained, and that I hope everyone else gained too, is that forging a completed community-service sheet is far, far easier than a job well done. Plus, afterwards, you feel warm and fuzzy that doesn't wear off the next morning and exercise the liver too much.



Blueprint Cartoon/Christina Hirano

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Senioritis Type 2 Looms

An expert warns us of a new malady facing seniors

By Kristin Studeman
Editor-in-Chief

No one ever told me that there are two types of Senioritis.

Type 1, as described on this year's senior shirt, includes "an increasing lack of concern, extreme laziness," and yes, "bum status." By the end of junior year, every upcoming senior is utterly ready, prepared, and eager for the full-onset of Senioritis Type 1. (If they haven't already caught a mild case of it). Good-bye late-night study sessions and Saturdays wasted by SAT's, hello to minimum study and maximum fun. Wrong!

I always (blindly) assumed that seniors are entitled to reap the benefits of their Senioritis symptoms. Even more idiotically, I thought that the faculty forcedly accepts this "relaxed" (a.k.a. slacker) attitude with no complaints. I have already learned in the beginning of my senior year that Senioritis is not that simple. Although every senior endures a very different experience due to varying course loads, time commitments, etc., I quickly discovered that first semester is hardly the time to gain a knack to slack.

Between college applications, last-chance SAT tests, sports, multiple responsibilities, and yes, school, my free time is diminishing as fast as colleges can send me mail. In case you are not attuned to the amount of paper that colleges waste, the University of Evansville (???) sends me mail every other day. I get more mail than both of my parents combined. Although it is very exciting to think about going to college, the process of getting there feels increasingly daunting and, quite frankly, exhausting. Welcome to the symptoms of Senioritis Type 2.

Signs of Senioritis Type 2 are easily identifiable. Sheer exhaustion, stress and tension are basic indicators of the disease. However, I am positive I am not alone in saying that the worst factor is the immense, overwhelming, and seemingly endless college application process.

In the past few weeks, I have noticed that Senioritis Type 2 has hit my peers like the bubonic plague. They are walking zombies in the hallways and yawning-machines in class. Lunchtime has officially been replaced with my favorite kindergarten ritual: naptime. In the

case that people are awake and talking, any mention of college is a fabulous way to bring a conversation

to a deafening halt. Oftentimes, my friends shout in a chorus, "Stop! I don't want to talk about it!"

Everyone seemed enthused and willing to talk about college in years past, but suddenly it's like a chore. We avoid it. This procrastination factor is Type 1 fighting Type 2. I just want to enjoy my final year of high school without the existing pressures of hours of painful college applications in addition to succeeding in school.

That wish may only come true in Never Land. Yet, the pressures of life are Forever Land and will always exist. Senioritis Type 2 will soon disappear like teacher recommendation letters that I will never get to read. Type 1 might get a little worse. The exciting adventure of senior year far outweighs the pain and pressure that cause Type 2.

Peter Pan gives flying lessons in Hook and his main advice is to "think happy thoughts." Happy thoughts might just be the perfect antidote to this mid-college application process drudgery and send seniors flying high. But for now, I have to get back to papershredding my packets from Evansville.

SENIORITIS

Definition: An increasing lack of concern

Build-up Does Not Disappoint

Highly Anticipated Dons' Football Season Starts Out Strong

By Sara Caldwell

Sports Editor

After four years of anticipation and preparation, the Acalanes football seniors stepped into the crisp fall air, onto the gridiron and set up plans to slide into the Acalanes record books as one of the most talent-rich and potentially successful teams in history.

With only 28 players, the Dons squad is smaller than any team since the 2002 season, the first and only time the Dons played for a North Coast championship. Because of the size, the team relies heavily on senior talent four years in the making.

Luckily for the Dons, senior talent

shakily, with the Dons coming up empty-handed on the first four possessions. However, the tide of the game changed in the hands of Beeman and Masi. The last minute of the first half was all about Beeman, who scampered 33 yards up the middle, only to find himself in the endzone only two plays later to tie the game 7-7. Beeman ended the game 6 for 13, having rushed for 68 yards and thrown for 136 yards.

Just as Beeman was able to use both his arms and his legs to score, Masi was just as dangerous on offense and defense. While catching five passes for 104 yards, he also intercepted two passes, preventing Miramonte from carrying any momentum down the field.



Blueprint Photo/Bryan Schnugg

Senior Sam Briggs barrels past the Campo defense after senior teammate Cole Adcock flattened a Cougar defender during the Dons' 35-3 blowout.

is not in short supply. The team boasts six returning varsity starters, all of whom have started since their sophomore year.

The Dons boast a stingy defense which includes the killer B's of defense (Sam Briggs, Chris Bohannon, Gavin Beeman, Nick Bruzzzone and Mike Balestreri) are complemented by free safety Dan Masi, unstoppable Dan Lopez, and hard-hitting newcomer Matt Wood.

Having such aces up the team's sleeve proved to be the key against a much-hyped Miramonte squad. The boys also demonstrated in a decisive fashion that last year's 24-12 was no fluke, winning 21-7.

The game against the Mats started

Adding the win to a prepenis-season win against Ukiah brought the record to 2-0 to start the season.

The squad hoped to carry the momentum of their first league win into the next match-up with league powerhouse College Park. Prepared for a perfect season, the game and its controversial end left a sour taste in many of the boys' mouths.

The game see-sawed back and forth, with each team fighting to gain and maintain the lead. The final play of the game saw College Park preparing to kick to win the game. Acalanes was called for roughing the kicker, and College Park had one more chance to score, one more chance to defeat the Dons.

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ACALANES BLUEPRINT

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Congratulations to varsity football for their strong season. We applaud their hard work and dedication. Good luck in the Homecoming 2005 game to-night against Dublin. Go Dons!

Spike in Emotions Pumps Lady Dons Foward

Intensity from fans and players paving the way to success

By Aaron Kwan
Staff Writer

School is tedious, dreary, tiresome, mind-numbing, and monotonous, but for some, the fall season means something more than just a return to prison - it is time for kills, digs, serves, and spandex.

The Dons varsity volleyball team started off in fine fashion with a well-earned 7-2 record in the DFAL. The sole losses of the season were in the league opener against a vicious Northgate team, and Campolindo last week. Following the opening loss, the Dons got back on track and won their next seven showdowns. Despite defeat, these games in no way darkened the bright spirits of the team.

While taking down the nets following their first loss, Carly Bouza, who delivered 12 kills in the defeat, noted that "[they] needed to come out with just more energy and wanting to win; more aggressiveness." More energy? More aggressiveness? That seemed to be a tough thing to do. Any spectator of the girls' games would appreciate that this would be no small feat - the intensity level is so high already.

Fans have learned that there is never a dull moment at an Acalanes volleyball game. The Dons are always cheering, congratulating one another, picking each other up, and the energy level is always high. The entire team plays with a level of intensity that could easily be compared to a Raiders fan in the black hole (Oh, geez).

As the Dons went on to face their next opponents, the fans were certainly in for some excitement. With building strength, the Dons beat Alhambra, Las Lomas, and Dublin in a combined 7 games. While the win against Dublin was a forfeit, it is realistic to think the opponents were just intimidated (and after all, a win is a win).

While the subject is winning, the potent offensive attack from all across

the board has handily defeated many of their toughest opponents, including Miramonte in an easy 4 games. The Dons weren't as intense as usual, but had no trouble disposing the Mats. In the third game with the Dons up 2-0, the team felt they could cruise a bit and put in some of their backups.

to get a chance to play." They lost the game 25-27, but were able to come out for another in which they won in total domination, 25-10.

In the next matchups, the Dons made quick work of Mt. Diablo, Concord, and College Park in nine straight games. After a loss in game three a week earlier, the Dons weren't going to give any slack to the competition.

The Dons have crafted a team that has proven strong offensively and defensively. This team has done its share, with almost all of the starters contributing an average of over five digs per match. Even players off the bench are stepping it up, playing hard, and building the intensity even more.

The intensity exuded by the players is infectious, spreading into the stands. Seniors Kyle LaHonta and Tony Panacci come to practically every game. Their intensity affects the atmosphere and tempo of the game. Kyle LaHonta says that he and Tony "try to keep confidence up, boost team morale," and says that they want to affect the game in a good way and be positive. LaHonta also added that there is no stopping Alex and Carly Bouza, declaring that "it's just a one-two punch; you can't beat the twins. They've got built-in chemistry."

After the defeat of Concord, Tony Panacci gave an outright prediction on the season, stating

that "as long as we are here to support, the Punisher (Michelle Swift), the MVP (Carly Bouza), A-Train (Alex Bouza), the li-baller (Ally Mitchell), and the rest of the team, can dominate.

Indeed, if the girls can keep up the positive energy and continue to match it with solid skill, league championships are a definite possibility.



Senior Sarah Ting taps the ball over the net in the first game of what would be a bitter loss against Campolindo.

Senior Ally Mitchell is the Dons' libero, (a special position distinguished by a blue jersey that can substitute in and out at any time, but cannot spike or serve) and had a few words to say about the loss in game three of the Miramonte match. She sat out for the third game, but welcomed the break and said that she "definitely wanted other teammates

Blueprint Photo/ Bryan Schnugg

Dons Rise above Par to the Top of the League

Lady Dons' golf steer clear of bunkers, follow in seniors' footsteps

Alex Wu
Layout Editor

When people think of high school sports, the typical mentality of adrenaline pumping football and explosive, high flying basketball comes to mind. Nevertheless, golf is about the individual focus and determination that brings a team success. The Lady Dons have consistently dominated the grass course and intend to continue their thriving program.

Last year, the Acalanes women's golf team was predicted to win first in league and attend the state championships. However, the team learned devastating news when the Hirano sisters decided to part ways from the team. Nevertheless, juniors Taylor Lee and Morgan Perales would not let the season crumble with the loss. Rallying the team, Lee and Perales led the team to a third place finish at the DFAL championships. Both golfers were named first team all league and Lee qualified for state.

Coming back as more mature and experienced seniors, Taylor Lee and Morgan Perales are leading the Lady Dons along with sophomores Stacy Song, Christina De Tomasi, Karly Topkis, and Jessica Bruns. In his ninth year of coaching both successful Acalanes men and women's golf teams, the encouraging Tim Scott is prepared to lead the Lady Dons the NCS Championships. "The girls are really working hard and playing well this year. During practice everyone is focused," said coach Tim Scott.

In their first match of the year, they rallied to overcome their Lamorinda rivals, the Campolindo Cougars, in a heated battle. Campolindo edged Acalanes in the DFAL championships last year by

eight strokes. However, the Dons would not let history repeat itself and by-passed the Cougars with a score of 252-262. Lee led the group by shooting a 41 on a par 36 course in Moraga. Teammates Jessica Burns and Morgan Perales shot a 46 and 47, respectively. "The win over Campolindo really gave us a moral boost. Getting



Senior Morgan Perales contributes to a decisive win over College Park, shooting 47 for the course and improving her team's record to 4-1

off to a strong start was important for us as a team," said Lee.

On the subsequent day, the Dons faced the unstoppable Miramonte team. Although Taylor Lee had the best score of 44, the Matador's lineup of heavy hitters was too much for the Dons to handle, losing to Miramonte 262-244.

Disappointed with their league loss to Miramonte, the Dons golf team picked up the pace against Concord, College Park, and Northgate. In both the Con-

cord and College Park matches, the Dons golfers scored lower than any of the opposing players. The Lady Dons easily destroyed Concord 238-347 and swung by College Park 237-298. Against the Northgate Broncos, Taylor Lee brought out all the stops. On a par 36 course, Lee shot a sizzling 37 to edge last year's MVP, Linga Ong, by five strokes.

To end the first half of the season, the Lady Dons demolished the Alhambra Bulldogs 213-280. The Bulldogs were no match against Taylor Lee who shot one under the 36 par course in Hercules. The rest of the team would follow behind her taking the top five spots. Morgan Perales shot a 40 while Karly Topkis and Jessica Burns both shot a respectable 45.

In the second half of the season, the Dons set their carts on cruise control, rolling over everyone in their way. Alhambra, College Park, Las Lomas, Northgate were targeted by Taylor Lee and Morgan Perales' pinpoint shooting accompanied by the constant barrage from Stacy Soong, Jessica Burns, and Christina De Tomasi. Stacy Soong added, "The season is going really well. We're all having fun and working really hard."

Nevertheless, the second battle between Campolindo and Miramonte was a highlight of the 2005 DFAL season for the Dons. Facing both Lamorinda rivals on the same day, Taylor Lee and Morgan Perales brought out all the stops. The previously undefeated Miramonte Matadors were stunned when the Dons triumphed with a 215-231 win. The Campolindo Cougars were not even up to par with the Dons level of play shooting a 284. The Dons continue their season tied with Miramonte for first place with an 11-1 record.

The Acalanes Lady Dons golf team wraps up their season against Concord and Las Lomas which should be unproblematic for the high powered Dons. Taylor Lee and Morgan Perales will lead the Dons into what will be an arduous DFAL Championship.

Blueprint Photo/Ali Cellini

sports

Girls Water Polo Flounders in the Early Season

Not the start expected from the previously strong Lady Dons

Jay Yargladda
Staff Writer

Do you ever have one of those weeks where just about everything seems to be going against you? As hard as you try, the results you expect won't come and the corner does not appear to be approaching anytime soon.

Ask a Lady Dons water polo player - that's just the kind of start they have encountered in the initial stages of the 2005-2006 season and believe me, it hasn't been a pretty sight.

The Lady Dons have had a forgettable start to the season, dropping their first four league games against Las Lomas, Northgate, Miramonte and College Park by an overwhelming margin and performing poorly in the initial tournaments, leading one to question the chemistry this squad possesses.

This year's Dons team took a major hit through senior graduation. Last year, half of the players were seniors and almost all of them started on a regular basis. Lead by Co-MVP of league Nicole Hughes and 5 other dominating starters, the Dons racked off win after win with the enormous talent and experience that existed on the squad to earn a very respectable season.

This year's Dons team possesses an enormous amount of talent. Led by sophomore Taylor Stern and seniors Lizzy Flower and Sara Caldwell, these players have talent that is virtually unlimited, but the experience is lacking due to the fact that the incumbent starters did not get as much playing time last year.

"They have a lot of young players who will get better throughout the season," said sophomore Brett Lambert, a fellow water polo player who has often watched the girls' games.

Coach Buchel agreed with the assessment, saying "We're very young; we only have seven upperclassmen total and we're pretty inexperienced... there are only four players who were on varsity last year, so we're learning on the fly quite a bit."

The inexperience of the Dons certainly led to Florence Nightingale-like performances. In four DFAL contests, the

quently resulting in the blowout loss. The same problem occurred against College Park when the Falcons scored a goal of a turnover virtually a minute into the game.

Junior varsity coach Jay Warner said "College Park is probably one of the better teams. We already knew going into [the game] that they would be one of our toughest competitors. There was not much we could do on skill level. We're still a very young team. It's hard but we'll get there."

Warner offered a reason for the lack of cohesion, saying that some of the girls did not play in the summer league so they are still getting back into the rhythm.

Fortunately for the girls, it's not how you start, it's how you finish. Their schedule was such that they played the strongest teams early in the season,

and will now be able feast on some of the weaker teams to gain some confidence to end the year on a strong note.

"They're not doing to well at the moment but they're probably going to get better as the season progresses," said Lambert who continued by saying, "They played good teams in the beginning and it's gonna get easier."

Problems the girls are facing today are fixable in a short period of time through improvements in communication and chemistry, which players believe will come with more time spent together.

The coach said after the loss to College Park that his game plan for future contests would be to "be more aggressive defensively, see if we can knock down some of their shooters and generally speaking, be more aggressive on the offensive side as well, making sure we hit the target with the ball." With luck and practice, the Dons may be able to find a way to fix their problems, find some life and experience to turn the corner, and finish off the month strong and stable.



Blueprint Photo/Marie Dieden

Junior goalie Molly Quinn legs up against a Miramonte shooter in Acalanes's shut-out loss.

Dons played uncharacteristically poor water polo and were demolished by a combined score of 46-14. The Dons had just as many opportunities as the opponents, but couldn't follow through. Whenever the opponents set up their offense and got an opportunity to score, they did. The Dons too had their shares of opportunities, yet for whatever reason, the Dons failed to come through in many cases that they should have. "We got a lot of shooting opportunities but a lot of them went wide of the cage. We were generating chances but were weren't putting them on the target," said coach Buchel.

Another problem, exemplified in their game against Northgate, was the Don's tendency to fall behind in the beginning. Whether it was because of a lack of focus or aggressiveness or simply just being outmatched, by halftime, they were down 3-0 and after 3 quarters, the lead was extended to 5-0. By that time, the Dons were so out of it and playing with so little energy and urgency that they allowed 5 more goals in the ensuing quarter conse-

Polo Plays Follow The Leader

Seniors Andron, Burgin bring valuable experience to ultra-talented team

Sara Caldwell
Sports Editor

The start of water polo season is a time of adjustment as players begin the process of forming a team from individual talents. For Acalanes boys' water polo, the formative process has been nearly seamless. Steeped in experience, the team has been able to quickly crystallize and look forward to a highly competitive year.

Such success has been in no small part due to the contributions of two seniors, whose personalities and talents drive this year's squad. In some ways, polar opposites and in other, near twins, seniors Paul Burgin and Stephen Andron have been waiting for this season, and they have proven themselves ready to play.

Flashback to the 2002 water polo season. Andron and Burgin were the lone freshman on a talent-heavy squad that boasted an All-American, three first team and five second team all-league players. The team would go on to win league over Miramonte that year - in the minds of Andron and Burgin, the bar was set.

Sophomore year, the two began to establish their own styles of play. Behind all-American Mike Ferrif, Andron was preparing to take up the mantle of hole-set, a highly demanding and physical position more akin to wrestling than swimming. Burgin, on the other hand, began to use his speed and outside shooting as his greatest asset, and began to be known for his drives and one-on-one counters that often left him with a wide open cage. Both boys were honored that year with second-team all league awards.

Today, the two, along with the junior duo of Nick Ferrif and Bryan Schnugg, control the offense.

Andron's stats so far this year have left no doubt that he has taken this season seriously - he has scored in every league game and is a consistent performer in tournament play. During a nail-biting game against Las Lomas, Andron put in two goals, preserving the Dons' one goal lead in the DFAL opener. Against San Ramon, he kept his lead as the team's top scorer, putting away four goals to push the team to a 9-6 win.

Burgin's stats have not been as strong this year, but his presence has been felt as deeply. Injured badly early in the season, the rehabilitation process has been long and has prevented the senior



Blueprint Photo/Marie Dieden

Despite senior Dino Sulprizio's pressing out on a Miramonte opponent, the Dons went down 8-7.

from practicing and playing. However, Burgin could hardly be described as unprepared.

As a member of the Olympic Club Premier Team, Burgin plays with some of the highest level players in the world. Starting at the tender age of fifteen, Burgin learned to be humble in the face of Olympic-caliber talent. "Playing O-Club is crazy... [it taught me] shot-blocking, mostly" said Burgin.

Burgin's experience carries through into the highschool season. Unafraid to take risky shots from the outside, Burgin's competitive swimming background makes him a frightening opponent.

Few polo players condition at the level Burgin does, swimming long-course during the summers and continuing swimming throughout the school year. "You can still counter in the fourth quarter when you condition more than the other guy," said Burgin.

Between the two, there's nothing but respect "Steve shows up and plays. He's always solid," said Burgin. Fellow senior Dino Sulprizio: "Steve is our offense. We run everything through him, almost every play centers on him... he's our team leader in the pool." Sulprizio also mentions the relationship between An-

dron and Burgin in the pool, saying "Paul has great control. He's a really good passer and can set up a lot of the plays we run... Andron can control people at set... we always look to him to run the play."

Just as they feed off one another in the pool, the pair complements one another personality-wise. Andron is known for his quiet leadership, while developing over the years "into a much more physical and aggressive player" notes Sulprizio. Burgin, on the other hand, "is confident... his confidence and aggression rubs off on the rest of the team and gets people fired up."

The squad, with Andron and Burgin at the helm, look forward with optimism to North Coast, where they hope to defeat league rivals, continuing the wave of strong play.

"The best moment of the season so far has been our game against Drake," said Sulprizio. "We were supposed to get rocked, and we didn't... I think that really shows what our team is capable of."

sports

Dons on the Run Towards an Impressive Season

Miles of hard work pay back as Dons pound competition

Taylor Stern
Staff Writer

The hours of grueling summer training have proven worthwhile, as the hard work of the Acalanes cross country team pays off on the pavement.

Both the varsity women's and men's teams return looking strong despite having lost critical members to graduation. The women's key component is senior Mo Huber. Coach Tad Beach said, "Mo Huber has had a great beginning to her season. She worked very hard this summer. She just seems to glide along when she runs. She has a shot at winning it all. It isn't often that a school has a runner as good as she is."

Sophomore teammate Grace Appert commented on running with Huber, "It is unbelievably motivating. She is always encouraging you. Even if you are much farther behind her, she always tells you how well you are doing. It makes you feel really good about yourself."

Rounding out the team are seniors Sara Clancy and Kristen Marchus, along with sophomores Grace Appert, Dara Dickson, and Rebecca Lorenzana as well star freshman Michelle Caine.

The boys' side boasts depth of talent. Expectations run very high for the varsity group, especially with junior Connor Mooney and sophomore

Nate Beach, each having run at least 1100 miles this summer. The coaches also anticipate freshmen Ethan Mark and Ryan Troxel to achieve incredible things. Both participated in the Junior Olympics this past summer, and Mark is ranked as the nation's fourth fastest 1500 meter runner in his age group.

With such an impeccable group of athletes, the coaching staff has been optimistic and has set high standards for the season. Manny Myers, head coach of fourteen years, predicts, "The team's main goal is for the two varsity teams to try and get back into the State Meet in November." He hopes to improve the girl's fifteenth and the guy's thirteenth place finishes at state last year.

In order to make these dreams a reality, the establishment of an extreme practice regimen was necessary. In the varsity boys' scenario, the long distance athletes run about eighty-five miles per week, while the middle distance guys run just forty-five miles. Some of them even chose to run at the crack of dawn.

The team practices six times per week, unless interrupted by a meet. Also included in practice is a 'core' routine that the entire team participates in daily. Coach Beach explains, "To get the most out of your legs, one needs to have very strong stomach and lower back muscles. This helps hold the upper body

up with less fatigue, allowing the arms to swing strongly, creating a rhythm or cadence of leg speed. We put together a 'core' routine that the whole team does every day. It is getting everyone strong



Courtesy Photo/David Dickson

Senior Ryon Lawson sprints down the back stretch, expanding his lead over Alhambra and Northgate opponents.

while bringing them together as a team.

The hard work takes a toll on the athletes, but one they relish. Appert said, "I'm happy that I am sore... because it means I'm getting stronger."

All of the hard work put into practice was reflected in the results of the first few meets. In the only home league meet on September 21, Acalanes took on College Park and Mt. Diablo. The men won the meet and took first and second place. The women gave their opponents a run for their money, but the numbers did not add up. Mo Huber and College Park's Nicole Pennes ran side by side for all but the last 600 meters of the event, when Pennes had an energy explosion and took the lead, sprinting ten seconds ahead of Huber. Michelle Caine and Dara Dickson finished next in fourth and fifth.

After a few days to recover and regain strength, the Acalanes varsity team was back at it again, this time at the Stanford Invitational. Mo Huber cruised in third of close to 190 starters with a time of 18:58, establishing a new all time school-course record. Overall, the girls took fifth place, leaving 22

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Courtesy Photo/David Dickson

Varsity girls explode off the finish line, pushing past Alhambra and Northgate runners to gain an early advantage.

Reshuffling Leads to a Royal Flush

Fresh faces and new ordering revive girls' tennis

By Alexx Perloff

Staff Writer

A team's success varies with cohesion among its players and the overall skill level available to the school. With this said, this year's Acalanes girls' tennis team is one of the best that the school has seen in the last four years of trials and tribulations.

Having a team ascend to such a high level of skill without consistent practice can only come from a massive reworking of the ladder, the ordering of players within the team. "You always have some key people leaving. So you're always going to miss those people and have others step up to the plate," said Acalanes Booster's Club liaison and mom of senior captain Stephanie Davenport, Trish Davenport.

Although formerly in the number one spot on the teams starting line-up, Davenport uses her number three spot to show what it means to be a veteran, as the pressure of number one can make one come undone.

"It's really more satisfying to play a lot more *good matches* and have them be a lot closer," said Davenport, adding that her new position allows her to keep up morale as she is consistently more competitive. This attitude is shared by all of

the still very formidable seniors, including Megan Grove, Renee Gilardy, Maddy Malvini, Meaghan Haley, and Margaret Park, all of which are seated two seats lower than in the past season.

While there have definitely been returning players that have worked their way up the ladder and brought with them the knowledge learned on the job, it is also worth mentioning two new additions to the team. Alex Iova, a junior transfer from Las Lomas, has been named by Amanda Roberts to be "the best (bleep) player" the Dons have had. Doubles player Roberts goes on to say that Iova's tennis etiquette is the best example of sportsmanship seen on the team. This hard-hitter is by far the Don's go-to woman and has taken over as number one on the starting lineup, "thriving under the pressure," according to coach Ed Collins. Number two on the Don's star line-up is freshman Mary-Alice Paulsen, who can beat down most of the returnees with her mean one-sport determination. She shows deep potential, and will be intrinsic to the team in the future.

Many people might feel a bit faulted by the movement in the rankings, but the Dons' line up has lacked strength for a long time, and all of the players are getting behind it. "Having them on the team did push all of the players down into a more of a comfort zone where they didn't have to play such challenging matches. And now we have a better chance of winning, which is a good thing," said number five on the star line-up, junior Laura Harper.

Acalanes girls' tennis has always had a tough time battling for supremacy with Campolindo, Miramonte, Dublin, and Northgate, which was apparent at the September 29th match against Campolindo. Although it wasn't a season opener, this match



Blueprint Photo/Ali Cellini

Junior Alex Iova focuses on the ball during a return serve during an intense practice session.

showed the "continuing learning curve" that freshman Catherine Friedman says will continue for the whole team up until the culmination of skills at the DFAL tournament. Now standing at 5-7, seven points behind leader Miramonte, the girls are poised to finish the season strong.

With a whole crew of perfectly balanced freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors who are teammates on and off the court, the Dons are relishing the brand new facilities, especially after their long hiatus away. Now that the courts are finished, the Dons have stepped up their practice, especially in aggressiveness, and welcome all support at their matches. With less than half the season to go, a 5-7 record, and their biggest matches yet to be played, the Lady Dons are on the court and slammin' towards victory, hoping to pick up an abundance of lockouts at their new home courts and make it past the third round in the DFAL tournament.

Art Lehman

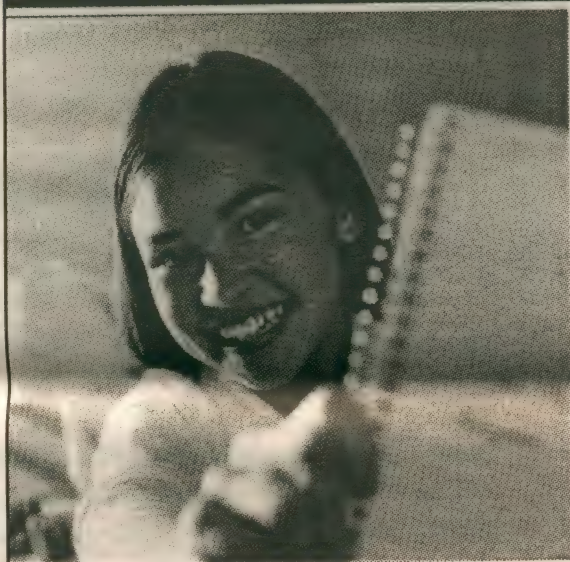
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Cross Country

Continued from pg 34

other teams looking at their heels. The boys had even more to be triumphant about. Though their highest finish was Nate Beach's eight, the team still managed to capture fourth place.

In their next DFAL appearance, the Dons faced Campolindo and Concord. The varsity boys defeated both Campolindo and Concord, proudly handing Campo their first league loss since Miramonte defeated them in October 2002. Despite Huber's first place finish on the women's team, Campolindo won the competition.

After a week free of meets, selected members from all levels of the team packed their bags for the prestigious Clovis Invitational. The varsity boys, competing in the championship division, took tenth place. Nate Beach was eleventh of one hundred fifty-three other runners. The girls earned second in the varsity girls level, finishing behind their local rival, Campolindo.

With miles of training behind them, both the girls and boys look forward finishing out the season strong.

Football Team Leaders - through 10/14

Passing	PC	PA	Yrd	TD	Int
Beeman	37	70	609	8	3
Rushing	Rush	Yrd	TD	Avg	
Briggs	71	560	3	7.89	
Receiving	Rec	Yrd	TD	Avg	
Masi	19	286	7	15.05	
Scoring	TD	Pts			
Bohannon	10	60			

Low Down on the Showdown

Who: Dublin

When: Oct. 21 7:00pm

Where: Acalanes High School

The Dons return after posting a 3-0 record on the road, while Dublin is reeling from consecutive losses. "[Dublin] is hard working team that plays all four quarters, it should be a good game," said senior Gavin Beeman. Prediction: Acalanes 38, Dublin 12



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Bo McSwine

Football

Continued from pg 29



Blueprint Photo/Ali Cellini

Senior supporters show their colors, providing a portable home-field advantage at the Dons' mauling of Cougars at Campolindo.

The kick was blocked, the ball fell to the ground. As the Dons celebrated, a lone College Park player blindly carried the ball into the end-zone. Examination of game tape casts no light on the situation; while some referees appear to motion the ball dead, no whistle can be heard, the final indication that the play is over. Despite protests, the game was ruled in favor of College Park, and the boys had to wave goodbye to their perfect season. The team took the loss admirably well, however. Despite some initial poor sportsmanship on the field, the boys took the incident as a motivator for the rest of the season, stepping up the intensity of practices and preparing hard to prove that that loss would be the only won the boys would have to endure this league season. "[The loss] taught us to play to the whistle and play with all we had... there was more to the game than the end. There were other key

points that we should have taken care of," said Bohannon.

The next week's game against Campolindo was a time for the boys to take out some of their frustration and cement a solid place in the league standings. However, after a hard loss and the injury of Campo quarterback Emre Sezgin, the Cougars were looking to do the same thing.

The Cougars did not even have a chance. Unable to advance the ball, Campo suffered in a big way, with five interceptions hurting their offensive chances. Senior Bohannon was ready and waiting for Beeman on the offensive side, and was able to drive in a touchdown in the first half, pulling the Dons ahead 7-3. They never looked back, eventually winning the game 35-3. "Basically, we came together well and put up the points that we needed to," said Bohannon.

The momentum of the preseason has lasted, and the weeks of hard work are paying off. After soundly defeating both Mt. Diablo and Concord, the squad now looks forward to Homecoming against Dublin.



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Pre-Meditated Celebrations

Outstanding or Over-the-Top?

Dan Masi
Sports Editor

While I was watching a football game the other week between the Cincinnati Bengals and Jacksonville Jaguars, I witnessed something rare; the ball needed CPR! Not really, but that must have been what Bengals receiver Chad Johnson thought. After scoring a touchdown (not even a go-ahead touchdown), Johnson dropped to his knees and proceeded to pump and blow on the lifeless pigskin.

This celebration was obviously over the top, and although it may have been humorous, it probably made the Jaguars want to beat them even more (which they did 23-20).

Today, professional athletes seem to be more pre-occupied with what they will do when they finally score, before they actually score. I guess the old cliché, "you don't score until you score" was lost somewhere between Terrell Owens' sharpie and Joe Horn's cell phone.

The "art" of the over-the-top celebration is a fairly recent phenomenon. The most notable of the "over the top artists" is former 49er and current Philadelphia Eagle Terrell Owens. Owens has done it all, from acting like a cheerleader, mocking the dances of opposing player, and pulling out a Sharpie on national television and signing a ball.

T.O.'s behavior has spread; pre-meditated celebrations seemed to happen at every game. New Orleans Saints receiver

Joe Horn secretly hid a cell phone under the goal post and when he scored a touchdown, instantly ran over and continued to call his mommy.

Showboating, however, is not limited to just football. Every sport seems to have its own form of outrageous celebration. Baseball has its own celebration epidemic even if it's the most mild-mannered game in the world (unless you count curling, but

ally sacrificing the art of defense to show off how pretty their dunk was or how sweet their jump shot is. Jersey-popping, chest pumping, and air punching are all prevalent in any NBA, college, and some high school games.

What ever happened to the football player who would simply toss the ball back to the referee after scoring a touchdown or a basketball player who sprints down to play defense after shooting an important three-pointer? Old school players such as Emmitt Smith, Cal Ripken Jr., and John Stockton are all players that exemplify the type of hardworking unselfish players that are missing in today's professional arena. Furthermore, these players aren't just some hardworking no-names. Smith is the NFL's all-time leading rusher with 18,355 yards, Ripken Jr. played in 2,632 consecutive games, and Stockton, the ultimate team player, is the all-time leader in assists with 15,806.

Although measures have been taken to crack down upon unsportsmanlike, over the top, self promoting antics, it will take a lot more than a skinny, out of shape referee to stop professional giants. So next time when you score do

the classy thing, flip the ball back to the ref, get back on defense, and put your head down and run. But more importantly, remember the ball doesn't have a pulse.



Blueprint Cartoon/Sophie Benjamins

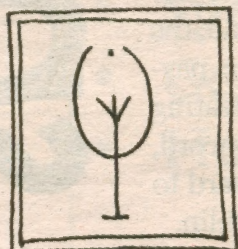
who cares about Canada's second favorite sport).

Home run trots, once the easiest 360 foot prance in all of sports, has turned into a chance to show the world how slow you can walk and how well you can follow a moving object. Manny Ramirez, a beloved Red Sox outfielder and one of the best players in the game, is constantly in the spotlight because of one of his post-home run staring contests. It's almost as though he cannot blink until he sees the little white ball disappear behind the fence.

In basketball, players are continu-

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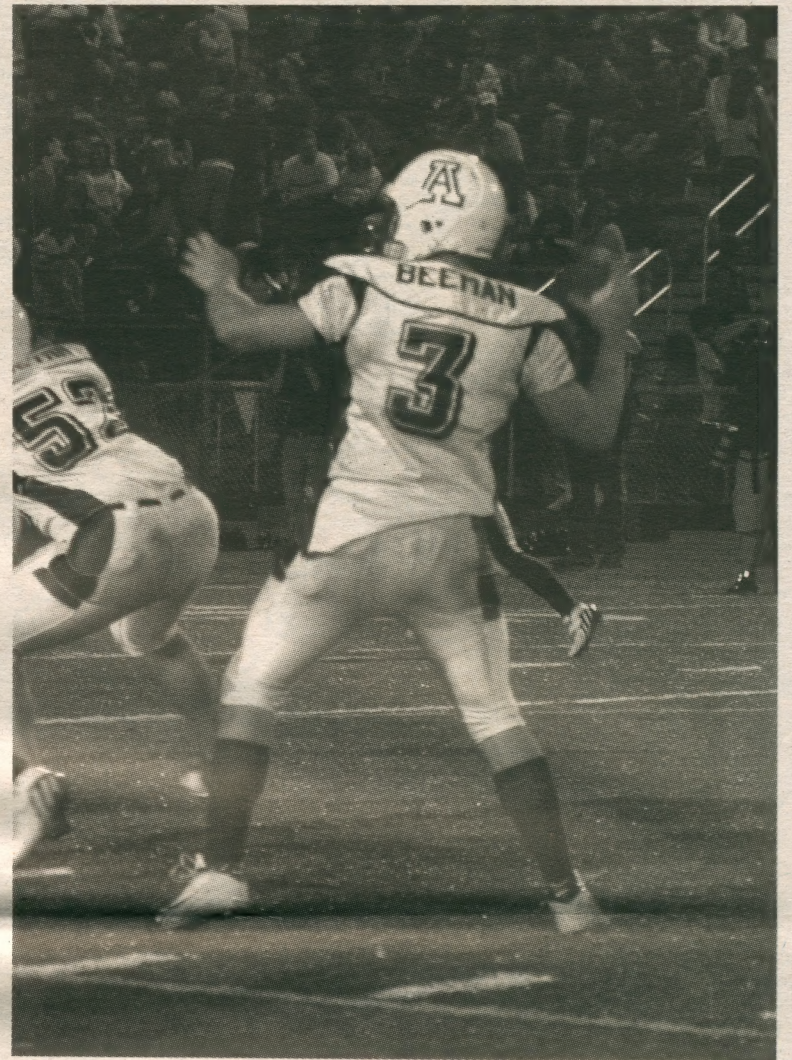
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Athletes of the Issue

Gavin Beeman

Leadership is a responsibility that polarizes people - some will turn away from the burden, while others flourish under the challenge, elevating both themselves and their team. Lucky for the Acalanes football team, senior quarterback Gavin Beeman is one of the latter. By virtue of his position at quarterback, Beeman leads on the field. However, he has proved himself to be much more than an average captain. Not only has his team taken notice - Beeman's talent has been making waves all over the area, and is currently the seventh ranked passer in the East Bay. Beeman has pure athleticism - he has proven himself deadly both throwing and running. In arguably the biggest game of the DFAL season against Miramonte, Beeman threw for 136 yards, including two TD passes, but he also rushed for 68 yards and one TD of his own, bringing his total touchdown passes for the year to nine. "Gavin is a player that gets the job done," said senior teammate Chris Bohannon. "He makes things happen when they count." For his pure talent, decisive leadership and consistent scoring, Gavin Beeman is Blueprint's Athlete of the Issue.



Michelle Swift

A team is only as successful as its weakest link - consistent skill in each zone of the court results in a nearly unstoppable offense and defense. This year's Acalanes women's volleyball team has no weakest link, and Michelle Swift stepped up and proved to be a great addition to the Dons, on and off the court. Her powerful spikes often help the Dons mark critical points throughout the game. Opposing players be warned, some of her heat-seeking are heading in your direction, and it will leave girls with "Spalding" imprinted on their chests. As one of the teams leading killers, with an average of 10 plus per game, she also stands out with some great defense. Swift is also up there with teammates Alley Mitchell and Alex Bouza with over 5 digs per match so far this season. "Michelle always adds a spark to our team whenever we need it," said senior Alley Mitchell. "She's been a great addition to our team and with her help we look to be very competitive." Cheered on as "the Punisher," Michelle Swift has proved to be a consistently formidable opponenet, and provides an example for upcoming players. For her invaluable intensity, consistent performance and quiet leadership, Michelle Swift is Blueprint's Athlete of the Issue.

